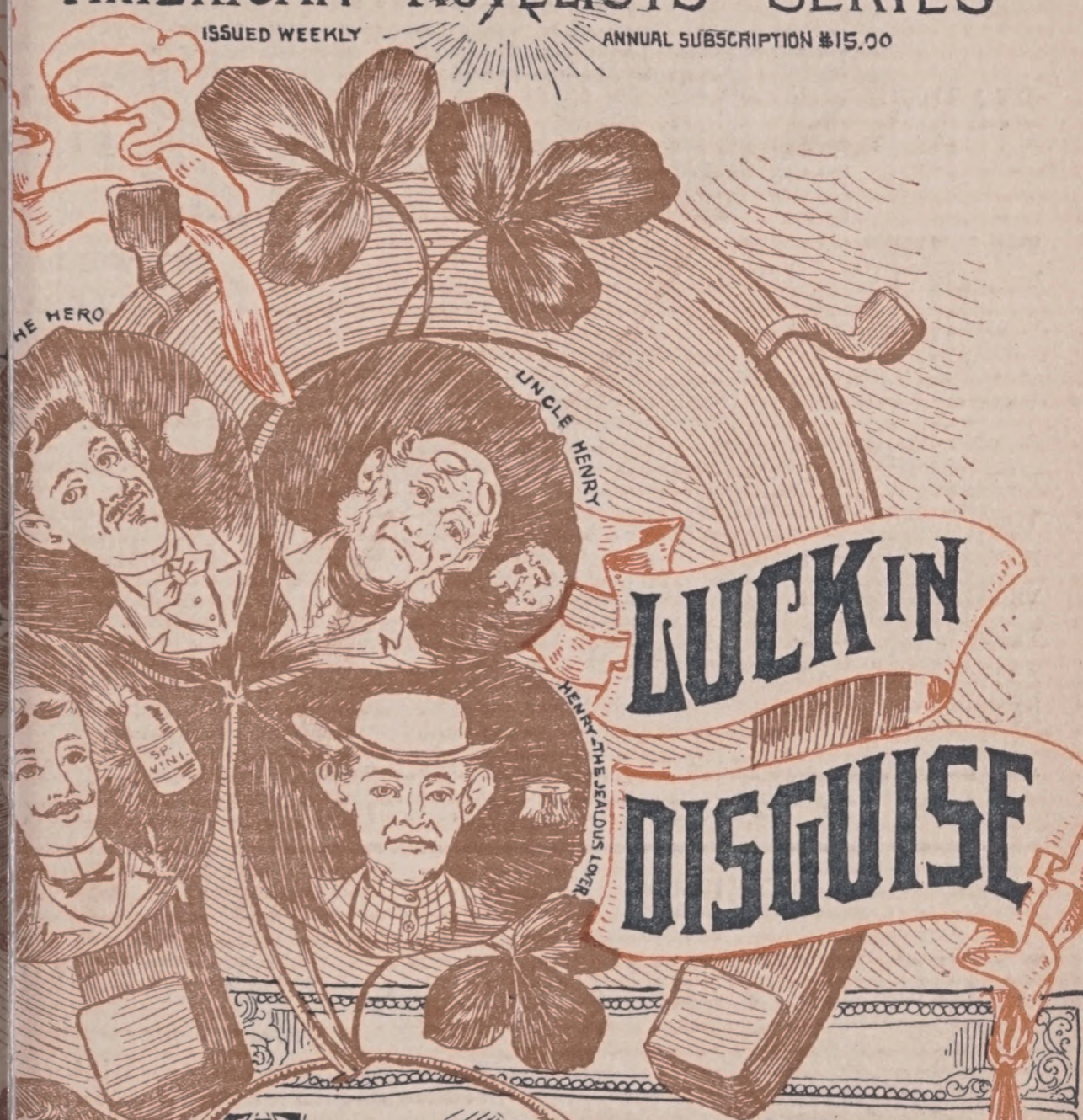








Written in Good Faith

BY

William J. Yexter of Adams Co
and copy prepared for the printer
with equal sincerity
by
L. P. Culter

Sole Proprietor of the Winchester News Depot.

A TALE OF LOVE, ROMANCE AND TRAVEL
INTO THE FAR WEST NEAR CHICAGO.

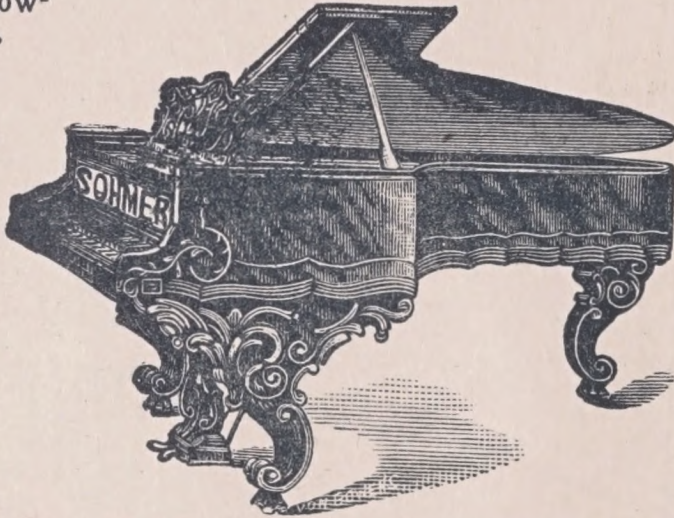
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

IMPORTANT.

THE publishers of this literary gem from the rural districts of Ohio, believe they are subservient to the best enjoyment of the public in placing this work on the market in all its virgin purity, free from the deleterious effects of editor's revisions and eliminations and full of those trifling errors which occur when true genius sends burning thoughts white hot from the pen.

The provincial simplicity and rural flavor of this work must appeal to all lovers of nature untrammelled by the decrees of custom and style.

The publishers desire to express thanks publicly to Mr. L. P. Culter, sole proprietor of the Winchester News Depot, for the careful and artistic assistance he has given the author in copying and punctuating the MS. To quote Mr. Culter's own words:

"In copying the story I marked every page at the extreme top edge "Luck in Disguise," and No. of Chapter, whatever the No. and Chapter was, so you

would have no trouble at all. You can take and mix them all up together and have no trouble separating them, by looking at the top of each page. As fast as I got one chapter ready I placed it in a No. 10 envelop and marked the No. of the Chapter on the outside of the envelop. This I did for my own benefit, yet I have decided to ship them to you in this condition."

While the method adopted in constructing this novel may not be of a character adapting it for use as a text-book on rhetoric, nevertheless writers of fiction and, in fact, all literary people, will find in it much to chain the attention and many new forms of expression never before attempted by other gifted authors.

It will be noticed that the clearness of thought is often due to the almost marvelous punctuation of Mr. Culter.

This note has been approved by Mr. Culter, and will doubtless add much to the reader's enjoyment, conveying, as it does, a hint at the ingenuousness of the never-before-known, but now-to-be-great author and punctuator.

THE PUBLISHERS.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL
COME, GREETING:

KNOW YE THAT—

WM. J. YEXTER, of Adams Co., Ohio, and L. P. CULTER, sole proprietor of the "Winchester News Depot," for and in consideration of the liquidation of certain indebtedness, and the receipt of certain sums of money from the John W. Lovell Company, do hereby transfer, convey and give over to the John W. Lovell Company all rights and titles in the novel known as "Luck in Disguise," written by said Wm. J. Yexter of Adams Co., Ohio, and revised, punctuated and wrapped in No. 10 envelopes by the said L. P. Culter, proprietor of said News Depot, in said town of Winchester, in the before mentioned State of Ohio, and it is furthermore agreed between Wm. J. Yexter, L. P. Culter and the John W. Lovell Company, that no claims shall hereafter be made for further reimbursement of whatsoever kind imagineable. To which agreemen we affix our hands and seals and signatures and all that sort of thing.

NOVEMBER 4th, 1889.

Author's name.

William J. Yexter

Reviser's name.

L. P. Culter

Name of witness.

Hannie Barrack
Dressmaker.

LUCK IN DISGUISE.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN launching upon the literary tide, this, the first volume of the Yexter Series, it seems proper to say a few words by way of an introductory. Some time has elapsed since the writer first began to receive solicitations from numerous persons of fine literary taste, to come before the public in the character of an Author but, unavoidable impediments has delayed volume first much to the displeasure of both writer and those interested. In the preparation of this story, Luck in Disguise, it has been the object to present something of interest and profit alike to old and young, but more especially to the latter class. With

this end in view, no little time and labor have been expended, and we have put forth an effort to freight each chapter with some good, moral lesson and to excite the emotions of the reader in such a way that its perusal may prove an actual pleasure and be continued from page to page. It is for a critical public to decide whether or not the labor expended upon our first volume has been such as to render it a success.

It is to be hoped each reader will find among the characters presented, some one worthy of imitation.

In the character of Mrs. John Means we find some of the noblest attributes of humanity, including the Christian graces of faith, hope and charity. Neither selfishness, pride nor envy find a lodgment in her nature. She is the embodiment of purity, and is always doing something to show her love, which is for the good of those around her. In Uncle Henry Means we have a like character ex-

cept that what he may lack in gracefulness of execution, he makes up in the ruggedness of his nature greater power of endurance. It is not a congenial tact with the masculine to exhibit such an external tenderness toward those in distress as that of the feminine, yet uncle Henry had his full share. He is a noble and pure specimen of humanity.

Young Man! you have a natural and familiar example before you, in the person of young Henry Means, who, although in reality being a moral, sober and innocent person, is charged with being guilty of certain offenses simply because of his associations. Unlike many others who have been compelled to suffer to satisfy the demands of the law, by reason of their inability to establish their innocence. Henry is successful in vindicating himself on every occasion yet, with much difficulty. We would admonish you, young Man, if you have bad associates to cut loose from them as they are dangerous. In trac-

ing the life and character of this young man it will be seen that he is the golden thread of the story. In the checkered career of this young man, wherein his friends were repeatedly shocked by reason of the accusations brought against him, the reader is shown that, although charges may be proven false, the very fact of their having been any semblance of a cause for bringing them will, in itself leave a stain, which time, the great leveler of artificial distinctions in society and the antidote for the wrong the detractor will find it difficult to efface. The old adage "Evil communications corrupt good manners," is absolutely true and the corruption of good morals can often be traced to the same source.

In the case of Sharp, the druggist, it is shown that a man to retain the respect of his neighbors and the public in general, must be what he professes to be or, in other words—if he is a sham in a business way, or a hypocrite in religion, the time for an exposure

always comes just so sure as it is a law of Physics that water will find its level. Always live sober, honest and truthful lives and you will be happy.

In the person of Miss Ella Means we find a perfect lady in every respect, one worthy the imitation of every young lady. Is it any wonder she is called the Bell of Nebraska? She is superlatively beautiful and first-class in accomplishments—loved and adored by every one.

In our introductory we have endeavored to define briefly, the leading characters of "Luck in Disguise," and must now submit the story to the perusal and judgment of our readers. If we have failed in our efforts to entertain you, dear reader, we are indeed very sorry and hope you will deal with us leniently in administering your criticisms, since we are but human and likely to make mistakes. In each succeeding volume of the Series, of which this is number one, we shall

endeavor to bridle our pen against impure thoughts and give you a purely respectable literature, worthy the companionship of any lady or gentleman.

WM. J. YEXTER.



"I WOULD THAT YOU RECIPROCATE YOUR STUBBORN WILL, JOHN MEANS, THAT IT MIGHT ACCORD WITH MINE."—CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER I.

“WELL, wife,” said Mr. Means, “What conclusion have you come to regarding Henry and have you counted the cost?”

“Yes, Henry shall rusticate during the hot season, as the air is so densely miasmatic in the city, that he is continually exposed to malaria, and other diseases, by inhaling the infected stench confined to the narrow limits of the city, and we cannot jeopardise the life of our dear son, by compelling him to remain in the city the coming summer. I would that you reciprocate your stubborn will, John Means, that it might accord with mine. Henry, you know, will soon be eighteen, and he is quite an old man in both looks and actions, all because he has been cooped up in the city, where a good breath of fresh air is seldom experienced. He is admitted a very

comely young man by all that know him, and we should endeavor to sustain it, and his social qualities are good too, but, he is gradually approximating to a lethargical, dormant energy that must necessarily be rejuvenated by some speedy agency, and I know of no surer way than to have him rusticate during the hot season, the incoming summer.

We should earnestly seek to improve and promote health as well as to count dollars and cents accurately.

What is wealth in a family of chronic ill-health?

In my estimation it is no more than a last years leaf is to an oak, after it has been blown from the twig that produced it, by the bleak Autumn breeze.

You may say I am too impetuous in my demands, but what would a true mother not do if it would promote the interest of her child and better its condition in this short life.

Life is too short to admit of the slightest abbreviation, occasioned by carelessness and wilful neglect on our parts."

"I hope you will carefully and earnestly digest the subject in question, and not carelessly either. You are too prone to treat matters lightly, when a few dollars are necessary to insure success."

"I am quite sure a brief rest in the country will not detract anything from his natural and cultivated nature; it will only better prepare him to execute his studies next school year. His manhood will then be invigorated and his now relaxed energy will then become vitalized, and he will return to us a brighter and nobler specimen of humanity than when he left us. If all this be true, which I firmly believe it will, we shall certainly be amply compensated for all our trouble and expence."

Thus, Mrs. Mean's responsive lecture was delivered one cold frosty morning in Decem-

ber, as she and husband were left alone to themselves, confronting each other, at the breakfast table.

A more favorable opportunity to press her claims had never presented itself, so she thought best to freight her arguments with the strongest logic possible. The children, five in number, having satisfied their ravenous appetites had repaired to the sitting room to engage in their sports and enjoy the funny anecdotes peculiar to Antie, as the old colored lady was called, who had made her home with the Means family since it was a family. The servant, Mary Brown, was busily engaged in the kitchen. Mrs. Means had made frequent efforts in the past, to lay the matter fairly and candidly before him, but knowing him to be very sensitive and obstinate when biased in his opinions, she kept deferring the matter until now.

She feared, should she introduce the subject, that he would enter into a lengthy dis-

cussion, endeavoring to substantiate in her mind, by numerous inferences and logical syllogisms, that her projects were gauzy and woman's folly, and thus weaken her faith.

Much to her surprise, he made no response at all, but took it in calmly and without the slightest perceptible irritation of mind.

While she was engaged in administering to him the law, peculiar to her sex only, she emphatically impressed her thoughts and, as she imagined, in a harmonious way, exercising all the while an egotistical importance that would discount a symphorial assemblage of learned philosophers, he, Mr. Means, kept his eyes vaguely in the direction of the window. His seeming inertness of mind, on the subject, proved conclusively to Mrs. Means, the inaptitude of her remarks on his mind, in the end. Several minutes had elapsed ere the silence was broken.

The unusual mum of Mr. Means on this occasion, created an ardent desire in the

breast of his better-half, to know whether or not her strong language had had its desired effect or, had irritated him, so, after pondering the matter over in her mind, she thought best to let the matter rest, for the time being, and introduce a new subject, believing the seed she was endeavoring to sow would fall on productive soil. So she thought she would question him regarding the anticipated trip to Cincinnati, he was preparing to make in a few days, and said:

“My dear, I feel so anxious about your trip to Ohio; wish it was over. At what hour does your train leave Chicago for the East?”

“I called at the depot, last evening to ascertain the necessary information regarding the departure of trains, etc., and the Agent informed me that my train would leave the depot for Cincinnati at 10:45, A.M., and requested that I be there at 10 A.M. sharp, that no mistakes be made, as there was a great variation in time-keepers.”

“Do you think of extending your trip to Boston too? You know you spoke, some time since of going to Boston to visit Uncle Joe.”

“Not unless my business demands it,” replied Mr. Means.

“Should you conclude to extend your trip to Boston,” said Mrs. Means, “telegraph me to that effect, as it will appease an ardent anxiety in my breast. I suppose should you extend your trip, you will be likely to remain East two or three weeks, providing you visit uncle Joe, otherwise, should he hear of your trip and not see you, he would become insulted.”

“Most certainly I will visit my venerable old uncle, should I go to Boston,” responded Mr. Means eagerly. “He has been a father and friend to me and courtesies bestowed on me are not to be forgotten, especially when done at a sacrifice on the part of the bestower.”

“When I was but ten years old, my mother

departed this life," continued Mr. Means, "and I shall never forget the sweet, comforting words of uncle Joe. I can hear them yet, and the impressions he made on me then, are lasting, indellible and eternal. He assumed the entire responsibility of taking care of me on the funeral occasion and for many days afterward. We would frequently go out walking together and he would endeavor to amuse me by narrating adventures of pioneer life, perilous contests with Indians and narrow escapes from the ravenous jaws of wild beasts. I became greatly attached to him then and the same childish reverence remains in me to-day. Forget him! no never. At the death of my mother, we were not living in the city, but on a splendid farm within one mile of the city. One day when we were enjoying our usual walk and chat together, we strolled leisurely into the city and soon found ourselves confronting a mammoth retail jewelry establishment. At his request

I remained on the exterior of said house, while he entered, as he informed me on that occasion, to purchase a watch-key. Peering into the luxuriant sales-room through the show-window, I could see his peculiar maneuvering and seemingly confidential conference with the salesman, but was unable to define such actions; it was beyond my comprehension. Having remained in waiting some ten or fifteen minutes, I became very impatient, and was about to invite him out, when he took from his pocket, his great wallet of bills and counted down three of them to the salesman, and replaced the great wallet in his pocket again. What does all this mean? (I soliloquized audibly and then concluded by saying) that can't certainly be for one little watch-key. Just then uncle invited me in and I was not slow about going. On entering the store I was made the happy recipient of a beautiful silver watch and an elegant chain of beautiful complexion, and

the much appreciated gift adorns my person to-day. On investigation I learned the three bills paid, were \$10 each."

"You were rather young," said Mrs. M., "to possess so valuable a present. From my brief acquaintance with uncle Joe, I esteem him very much indeed and think him a kind, generous hearted man, and would be so glad if you should conclude to visit him before you return home again."

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE they retired at the Means mansion that night, Mr. Means had given his consent to defer his trip to Cincinnati and visit his old uncle in Boston instead. He was easily persuaded, however, as his mind was free to it on first suggestion by his wife. The morning was beautiful and not the smallest cloud appeared in the broad canopy of heaven, and the inmates of the Means home were all astir. Notwithstanding the early hour of 4 o'clock, the children were up and enjoying the novelty of early rising, and seemed to be in a jolly good humor over their pa's anticipated trip to uncle Joe's. Mrs. Means being of a nervous temperament, easily excited and worried over trivial matters, did not appreciate the occasion as did the children. The frolicsome, boisterous children seemed to fret their

mother very much indeed, and had a tendency to impede the progress of her work, knowing that if her husband went on the 5:10 train she had no time to fool away. She very severely reprimanded the little folks for their noise, several times, but with no avail. Finally breakfast was announced and all were soon seated at the table. Having comfortably seated themselves and blessing invoked, Mr. Means consulted his watch and found he was limited to only a half hour to take nourishment and reach the depot.

“Oh, dear, dear, I could not enjoy a continuation of this state of affairs,” said Mr. Means as he replaced his time-piece in his vest pocket. “Railroad breakfast! just think of it. Who would have thought of the like ever happening in John Means house?”

“What now, dear?” said his wife. “Is your time too limited to enjoy your meal? You have the consolation of knowing—if you miss the early train you catch a later

one. Your going does not depend on this one train, thank fortune."

"This thing of early rising is not what it is cracked up to be," said he. "I feel so terribly dormant and dull. I have no relish for food after you have gone to the trouble to prepare it for me, but I will partake to prevent hunger after a while," continued he.

"For my part," said she, "I enjoy early rising, as I was raised that way when a girl at home. As you say, so I think, this is too much of a good thing by an hour or so. If I had my way, I would arise at five o'clock the year arround."

They hurriedly eat their meal and Mrs. Means and Henry, the oldest child, accompanied Mr. Means to the depot, a distance of three quarters of a mile. Henry's company was solicited, as she feared being out on the street so early in the morning, on her return home from the depot. They had just arrived at the depot in time for Mr. Means to procure

his ticket and board the coach, and he was soon on his way. On their return home from the depot Henry remarked:

“Mother, why is it pa did not even say good-bye? He seemed anxious to get in the coach and not give us a chance to bid him adieu.”

“Oh child,” said Mrs. Means, “your pa was feeling badly on account of leaving us behind. I hardly thought he would have the courage to say good bye and, therefore, did not press it on him. I would have felt much better over his departure had he allowed us the parting kiss and a shake of his hand, while we exchanged the parting words, adieu, especially should anything serious happen to him.”

Mrs. Means did not feel like rejoicing very much over her husband's departure, she was rather inclined to feel sad, yet she had not the slightest regrets for his having gone—indeed she was glad he had concluded to visit

his uncle Joe. It was really her fault that he consented to go, she having insisted on it the day before.

Mrs. Means was very much surprised, on her return home, to find such a sad gloom hovering over her household. The children were all mum and as still as death, and seemed quite heart-broken, which only had a tendency to deepen the solemnity of their mother—she felt, on entering the house, like her limbs would no longer support her frame, and could scarcely keep from shedding tears of sorrow. She had hoped to find the children as she had left them, cheerful and full of mischief, thinking it would assist her in bearing up under the present circumstances, and, in a measure, to forget her sore trial. She and Mr. Means were united as one, twenty years ago and never before, since their union had they been separated more than two nights in succession, but this time he expected a three or four weeks visit. He

had occasionally been called away, on business to Cincinnatti, and elsewhere yet never remained away over two nights. All that night nature's morphia had not quieted her shifting, restless thoughts. She would view the bright and then the dark side of the picture, occasionally rehearsing their conversation of yesterday, at unlimited intervals heavy moans and sorrowful sighs protruded from her lips, showing inward grief, the sequel of which has not been divulged. She arose quite early the next morning, in fact, much earlier than usual, as the night had failed of repose to her weary mind and body. She allowed the servant girl to remain abed, as did she yesterday morning, that she might prepare breakfast all alone without any one to disturb her thoughts. There seemed to be an unusual weight of grief bearing her down. It is quite evident that the brief absence of her husband had not caused the exhibition of such melancholy. No, that can't be it,

we must await further development in the case. The neighbors very readily perceived the striking change in her life, and many conjectures in the matter were made by her friends. After breakfast she retired to the parlor leaving the kitchen and dining-hall exclusively to Mary, the servant, whom she knew would manage that department as well, if not better than she could direct or oversee. At mid-day Henry rushed excitingly into the dining-hall where Mary was busily engaged at her usual work, and exclaimed, being much excited:

“Mother! mother! where is mother, Mary?” and Mary informed him of his mother’s serious illness.

“But,” said Henry, “here is a letter and I think it is from pa. She must see the letter as soon as possible, as we are very anxious to hear of his safe arrival at uncle Joes.”

“I can’t possibly be from your pa, as he

has not more than arrived there said Mary, "although he could have written from some point on the road."

"He might have had an opportunity, at some point, to have addressed us."

"Well," said Mary, "you must steal lightly into the room and avoid making unnecessary noise. Rest will do her more good than news, just now." Henry coursed his way into the parlor in a light but hurried manner, and was delighted to find his mother awake and feeling much refreshed. "Mother," said Henry, "how are you feeling now? I hope you are enjoying a refreshed mind and body after your little sleep."

"Yes, Henry, I feel much refreshed in both mind and body," said his mother.

"Have you just returned from school?" continued she.

"Yes, mother, I am just from school and have brought you a letter, which I believe to be from pa. The postmark is too dim to tell

where it is from but, here it is, open it quickly and we can soon see who the writer is."

"Oh, no, my son, it can't be from your pa, since he has not more than arrived at Boston, as yet. We will soon see, however," said his ma.

"You and Mary are both of the same opinion about it being too soon for to hear from pa, yet I thought, possibly he might have a chance to write to us from some station, where the train might be compelled to lay up awhile."

Mrs. Means opened the letter and read aloud, to Henry, as follows:

Lincoln, Nebraska, Dec. 2, 18—.

To Mr. and Mrs. John Means: Dear Brother and Sister;—It has been some time since we have had any intelligence concerning you. Hope you are all well. Our health is universally good. I shall only write a note this time, as I contemplate making you a visit

during the present month or the first of next month, and I will give you all the news when I come. Try and arrange business so that some of you can accompany me home. Ella is anxious to accompany me to your house.

Yours as ever, Henry Means, Sr."

A noticeable change of countenance came over Mrs. Means, as she read the letter aloud to Henry. She began to improve from that very hour and new life seemed to abound within and predominate over her being. Turning to Henry she exclaimed:

"Isn't that good? It would be so nice if your pa would permit you to accompany your uncle and cousin home and spend the hot season in the country. What do you think of it?"

Henry answered her in rather a jolly way and in the use of comic language, thus: "That is just the color of my kitten. We

must cut our notches to suit the cogs. Go, certainly."

"I am glad you are so anxious to go to the country, as it will do you so much good and learn you something too, but, what do you mean by cutting the notches, etc."

"I mean by that, that we have pa to contend with and convert to our plans. You know, there are always obstacles to overcome in almost everything we do."

CHAPTER III.

MRS. MEANS put in a sleepless night after receiving the letter. Her mind was at conflict. One moment her thoughts were bright and she felt encouraged; the next they were very dark. The following is a sample:

“Saved! yes, my own plighted love, Saved! yes my first-born son. But then his pa has refused me! I will plead, kneel and move not from my knees until he does yield to my entreaty. Oh, he certainly will submit to my earnest appeals. He will hear me, let me but plead. Peace! yes, I must attain unto it, or I shall go mad.

A mother's child is no common prize and no jewel is equivalent to its inestimable value. Henry's western trip is not the predominating burden of my sad heart. There are other griefs far more appalling and more

ghastly to behold. But a few days have elapsed since John left us for Boston, and it seems to me as though the few days were a month. Could I but see him and counsel briefly it would be such a relief to my troubled mind just now. The load of grief might be lifted off."

Just here Mrs. Means was interrupted in her lonely soliloquy, by the servant girl, who called at the room to invite her to breakfast, and was startled to find her still abed, which was something very unusual for her.

"Are you ill this morning?" inquired the servant.

"No, dear," replied Mrs. Means, "there is nothing unusual the matter with me, only I feel so sad."

"Wouldn't it be a great relief to your burdened mind and aching heart, to reveal your troubles, that others may condole with you, and, if possible, share your burden? This is sometimes a great relief, to have some friend

to disclose your griefs to, in confidence," said Mary.

"Uncle Henry's letter afforded me great relief in mind, and I love to keep perusing its contents," said Mrs. M. "The letter was short, yet, in my estimation, it contained a vast amount of valuable information. To reveal my thoughts, as you have suggested, would only involve the minds of others unnecessarily, therefore, I think best to retain it a while longer."

"O, no, don't endure a mental infelicity continually, when a revelation of it to your best friend might be the means of devising some plan whereby the evil tormenter might be completely extirpated, and you restored to the most perfect felicity again. I promise to do for you, what I can."

"Why should I encumber your happiness with my mental struggles, thereby multiply human distress where it could have been avoided, had I not made public my sore trials

and distress. I feel very greatful to you Mary, for your kind and generous-hearted offers, yet, I am not willing that one so good as you shall suffer on my account, even thought you are willing to make the sacrifice." As she uttered these words, her fair face flushed and her dark eyes glared and she seemed to have much fever. The servant retired sorrowfully, leaving her mistress to meditate in solitude, feeling that her presence only aggravated and darkened the scene. Henry entered the dining-hall soon after Mary, and the melancholy scene was sadly portrayed to the vision of his affectionate and tender mind. He dropped his head on his breast and stood trembling and mute, while the tears traced each other over his fair cheeks. He loved his mother supremely and could not bear to see her in such deep trouble. Having mastered his deep emotions, he said, with faltering voice:—

"Mary, do you think mother is danger-

ously ill? Do you think she will die? Oh, what can we do to relieve her?"

"No, I hope she is not dangerously ill," said Mary. "Her whole trouble seems to be mentally and not physically. There is something unusual on her mind which she refuses to divulge, preferring to keep it within her own breast."

"Do you thing it advisable that I procure the doctor's services?" asked Henry excitedly.

"We can better decide that by interviewing her," replied Mary.

"But stop!" said Henry, "she may object, should we depend on what she may say about it and then we would be at the end of our string. Should we stop to interrogate her on the subject and her answer should be no, I could not, though I would be tempted to disobey her."

"We need not necessarily mention the matter of procuring a physician, we will only

consult her regarding her present state of feelings," said Mary and she continued—"She may be much better now than when I called at her room. Come let's go up again and see her."

They stole noiselessly to the chamber door, where they paused for some time in breathless silence, and placing their ears to the seam of the door to glean some intelligent information concerning her condition. They could hear nothing but a low, soft moan and an occasional murmur as if she was talking in her sleep, but the articulation was too indistinct for their comprehension. Mary turned the door knob and they were soon in the sufferer's room, and found her enjoying sweet rest. This was indeed a relief to their troubled minds. They were satisfied from what their eyes had seen, that she was much better. Poor Mary, she had not only her hands but her heart full also. She had always made it a rule to discard the dark pic-

tures in life, as much as possible, and admit the bright and cheerful, as only a true christian can do, as she in reality was. Her soul was in daily training and strengthening—by duty, trials, and endurance here,—for glory, honour, and immortality hereafter. She did not, amid the rough and rugged parts of life's journey permit her feet to let her fall but pressed forward in the discharge of every duty, improving as strength and grace was imparted. When overwhelming griefs and soul-agonising troubles come upon her, she would be calm, patient, and submissive, and she had long and sedulous exercise of the graces of the Christian character. The scene through which she has, by duty, been called too pass through, has been the most trying of any during her life. Reader! I wish we were all like Mary—loving, gentle, and not so sacriligious as the great mass of the human race is, especially when slightly irritated in mind over trivial matters. They

remained but a short time in the sick ladies chamber.

“We will retire and not disturb her,” said Mary, “as rest will do her more good than anything else we can do for her, besides, she may have put in a sleepless night.”

Henry relied much on Mary’s judgment, and seemed willing to obey all her requests. Before retiring from the room, Henry gave one searching glance at the peacefully reposing form of his mother, and seemed to say, in actions but not in words: “Mother! mother! what would’st thou have me do? Say the word and it shall be done.”

They quietly retired from the room; Henry’s large bright eyes were again dimmed with tears, giving expression of the deepest sympathy. He was naturally very tender-hearted and it is useless for me to say, he loved his mother dearly, which is the duty of every young man and lady too—if they are devoid of motherly love they are not

worthy a place in respectable society; not only did he love his mother, but, he was the idol of her heart also.

Henry was indeed quite a man in stature, being nearly six feet in height and his weight was 150 pounds. He had acquired an extensive book education, having mastered all the common school branches, and his knowledge of logic, rhetoric, physiology, zoology, etc., was indeed astounding. No wonder that his mother held him in such high esteem. How many mothers now-a-days experience much difficulty in their efforts to keep their boys in school and many times girls too? They don't appreciate the educational advantages until they have passed from their grasp and then it is too late. It seems as though their most natural propensity is to shun the places of learning, and, as if drawn by magnetic force they flock to the places of merriment and of but little worth and allow themselves to grow up in gross ignorance

without an intelligent comprehension of the much needed commodity, mathematics; but Henry's mind seemed to drift in a different channel from most young people. It might be well to add, that, the advantages for acquiring an education under the graded system of to-day, is a rough one indeed. The pupil must certainly be an apt student if he gets to quit school with a decent knowledge of books. At the rate the educational advantages have been mutilated by a set of cranks, it will be only a few years until it will be said—"you had better keep your child at home for all the good it does to send him to school," and I don't know but it is virging on this point now.

"Hark! said Henry, "I hear a noise in mother's room. What can it be?" "I shall hasten to see," said Mary, "be patient until I return."

Mary went hurriedly yet lightly, and was pleased to find Mrs. Means had arose from

her bed and was dressing herself and said she felt better.

“I am truly gratified, Mrs. Means,” said Mary, “to see you are able to be up. I feared you had symptoms of fever. Do you feel like indulging in a light breakfast?”

“Oh, Mary, dear,” replied Mrs. Means, “you are so patient and watchful, and manifest such an anxiety for my welfare since my illness. How shall I ever reward you for your kindness toward me? You may prepare for me a little toast, I shall come to the dining-hall for it.”

“I go gladly and prepare your toast,” said Mary. “Can you think of anything else you could eat this morning?”

“I am so much troubled Mary, dear, I wish I could wait on myself more as you have enough other work to do without waiting on me continually. The toast will do just now—I can think of nothing else.”

“Worry not, Mrs. Means, it is a pleasure

to me to administer to the wants of the sick. I am thankful I am physically able."

In the meantime Henry was summoned to the front door to answer to the door-bell's signal, and soon returned full of gayety, just in time to meet the servant again in the dining-hall, who had just returned from his sick mother's chamber. The mail carrier had just brought them glad tidings from his father.

"See!" said Henry, "I have a letter from pa. There is no doubting this time. The postmark is very plain and reads—Boston, Dec. 20th., 1 P.M. and this is the 22d. This will be good medicine for ma."

He was so overjoyed that he could not await his ma's coming to the dining-hall. Off he went, and he was soon in the presence of his ma, and the letter placed in her possession. She soon divested the letter of its wrapper and read its contents aloud to Henry, as follows:

Boston, Mass., Dec. 20, 18—

“Dear wife and Family.—I hasten to write you my first epistol since my departure from home, this being my first opportunity. I was delayed one day, or nearly so, on account of a wreck, which occurred to a freight train on the night previous. On my arrival here I experienced but little trouble in finding uncle Joe’s. They were all enjoying excellent health and my own health could not be better than now. Home is never out of my mind one minute; hope you are all cheerful, happy and above all, in good health. I could not bid any of you good-bye when I parted from you—I could never stand that. Regarding Henry’s western trip, into the country, uncle Joe thinks it would be the making of him to have him go. Will write more again. Yours affectionately, John Means. ”

As Mrs. Means read her husband’s brief

missive her countenance became lit up and radiant, giving expression of a most hearty approbation. She refolded the letter as her husband had originally done, and gave the first mirthful expression since her husband's departure for Boston. Henry seemed to be in a quandary to know why he was the principal subject of all their conversation any more than the other children, and his mind was being very much agitated on the strength of it. Mrs. Means repaired to the dining-hall where her breakfast was in waiting and seemed to enjoy her meal very much indeed.

Henry remained in his mother's chamber, meditating over what had passed; while he endeavored to exhibit an outward calmness, he did not allow himself to cultivate a feeling of animosity or contemptuous disposition, especially toward the one he loved so much as his mother.

“Why are they so anxious to get me in

the country?" queried Henry to himself. "I am not so hard to keep in grub, I don't think, and if I was a ravenous eater, pa is amply able to stand it. He should have thought of the expence before he began raising his family, if the expence is what is hurting him, at this late day."

Leaving his mother's room, he decided to go on the loafer's list the remainder of the day, and he strolled down street and he was not long in finding companions of like employment. His heart was heavy and his sadness increased as he attempted to reason the matter in his mind. He was very sensitive and yet very affectionate. He would never do anything to impede or destroy the happiness of others and was always willing to lend a helping hand to those needing his aid or advice, and was most excellent counsel, although so young in years. The Means family retired early that evening. Henry retired early, thinking to tranquil his burdensom

mind. Poor boy! his mind was completely mystefied.

He could not comprehend the import of his parents scheme concerning him, never stopping once to examine the bright side of the picture, but continually scrutinizing the dark side, all the while rendering the picture more dark and hideous. He had never in his life doubted his parent's true love for him; hence, his conclusions were too rashly determined. Sabbath morning came and the family were up early and a peaceful calm seemed to pervade every breast. Even Henry had quite forgotten his troubles. His sleep seemed to have refreshed his mind and he was more like himself again.

"Oh, what a lovely day is this," said Mrs. Means, "I am glad to be able to enjoy it. I feel as though a mighty weight had been lifted from my breast."

"We were much concerned about you for a few days," said Mary, "and considered you

in a very dangerous condition. We are glad you can be with us and hope you may continually improve."

"I feel almost like a new person to day and hope I may not be compelled to undergo such a nervous attack again. I suppose it will not be many days until we shall enjoy the society of uncle Henry. His daughter Ella says she will try and persuade her pa to let her accompany him here. I am expecting them about Christmas-day and we must arrange for a grand reception before they come. Christmas, you know, is a great day for feasting and gayety. It has been six years since I have seen uncle Henry and probably would not know him. He is Johns twin brother and I think it is too bad they are deprived of being together no oftener. John and I were to see him, and family, six years ago, and we had an enjoyable time—they did all in their power for our comfort and happiness and I wish to return the compliment. Mary, you

can prepare something grand for them, regardless of expenses; all the enjoyments I have here are not of an extravagant nature, —even if they were, John Means is able to stand it, you know.”

“I will do it,” said Mary, “we shall have a jolly good time while they are here if you leave it to my judgment.”

“I license you chief cook and manager of the cookery department, for, I have thoroughly tested you and found you more than competent.”

“All right,” said Mary laughing, “I will do you a good job, health permitting me.”

CHAPTER IV.

THIS is Christmas day. Were we to attempt to describe the gaities and festivities participated in by the Means family, our language would fail us.

Suffice it, we will say, long before the morning twilight appeared in the Eastern horizon, to shed forth its phosphorescent rays through the thickly falling snow-flakes, the Means family were all in tune, preparatory to the events coincident and peculiarly allied to such occasions.

Mrs. Means mingled her voice and person with the servant and the children, endeavoring to dispel all gloom, and, if possible, to forget her grief that so impeded her happiness; despite all her efforts, her visage gave evidence of an unadjusted evil, which was forcibly portrayed in a sad and strangely melancholy look of her countenance.

The children seemed to enjoy the presence of their mother very much, and their questions regarding Kris-Krinkle, as they examined the contents of their stockings, were many. She could not answer all the questions and did not try, for had she attempted it she would only have found rest in the cemetery in the end. As the shadows of the night were shortened by the rising of the sun, and the darkness finally swallowed up the luminosity of its brilliancy, the sporting season became more intenable with the children. The ground was enshrouded in a coat of snow, emblematic of purity, from four to six inches in depth, affording excellent facilities for sleighing, and a large percent of the young people made good use of the opportunity. It proved to be more fun for man than beast, and one could not help expressing their sympathies for the jaded animals as they passed the streets over with unusual velocity, stimulated occasionally to

persevere by a free application of the unmerciful whip in the hands of the indiscreet driver. Despite the immensity of the snow and the disagreeable frosty atmosphere, the streets of Chicago were alive with urchins, running to and fro, wishing every one they met a "merry Christmas." It seemed indeed quite evident to the looker-on that they enjoyed a "merry Christmas" too.

The Means family were all at home, yet all out in their front yard or on the pavement fronting their costly mansion. Had it not been for the anticipated visit of the children's uncle Henry and his daughter Ella, they too would have engaged in the sports of the day. They were too anxious to see their expected visitors to venture far from home, as they were not sure as to what train they could arrive on if they came at all that day.

As they stood in groups admiring the transitory scenes of gaiety, Estella, the only daughter approached her mother, being filled

with tender compassion, and her soft, sweet blue eyes were dimmed with sympathetic tears as she said:

“See, mother, look! how my heart aches for those poor little ragged children over on the corner. I would like to know their history. It must be a sad one indeed. Let’s investigate their circumstances, will you mother?”

The mother manifested an intense interest in the poor unfortunates too, and expressed an anxiety to become acquainted with their situation, but Joe reprimanded her rather harshly, saying:

“Why are you so interested in those little brats, they are nothing to us and we don’t have them to keep. Let’s enjoy our Christmas and let the little outcasts alone. Home is the place for such little ragged scallawags as they are. We pay for all our Christmas fun.”

As Joe spoke these words his mother and

the children all gave him such a look of reproof and surprise, that his countenance fell as he uttered the final sentence, for he could easily tell by their earnest look of reproof that they were all against him and disapproved of his chaffy remarks.

“Oh! Joe,” retorted his mother, “you are certainly beside yourself! How dare you retain or cultivate such cruel thoughts?”

I am well aware they sustain no filial relationship to me, but they are some poor mother’s children, and are deserving of much pity.”

Just here Joe interrupted his mother by saying—“There is no necessity of children running in the streets in their condition, in a free country, when everything is so cheap and plentiful.”

“My dear, hasty son,” said Mrs. M. “You should first hear the testimony before passing sentence. They may have no father, as you have to administer to their pressing ne-

cessities, and, if they have a mother, she may be sickly and find it difficult to provide for the support of the little ones thus left to her care. Suppose they have a father, and he a poor, worthless inebriate, must we as rational human beings suffer their tender, helpless forms to perish from the cold to which they are now exposed, or die from hunger, when our table and pantry are groaning under the enormous weight of dainties, as well as substantial food prepared, by Mary, expressly for this occasion, that we might eat, drink, give to our neighbors, that we may all be merry?

It does my soul good to be able to help the poor and needy.

I am sure they can't help it if their parents don't do right, if indeed they are to blame."

Stanley, the third son, is but thirteen years old, being two years Estella's junior. He is a bright, beautiful, red-cheeked and dark-eyed boy, and very large of his age, and his

ways were very pleasant and winning, unlike that of his obstinate brother Joe. Having listened with interest to the conversation regarding the poor little children, Stanley finally asked permission of his ma, to go after them, which was granted him.

Off he went, taking Willie, the youngest, who had but recently passed his eleventh birthday, with him. They seemed to esteem it an honor to lead the poor, little, illy clad children to their father's beautiful mansion, and to treat them as, perhapse, they had never been treated before. They were not long gone, however, until they returned bringing their guests with them. "Good morning little folks, come into the fire, you are near about frozen," was the kindly salutation given them by Mrs. Means, upon their arrival at the front gate. "How is it that you are out on the streets this cold day," she continued.

"Oh! we are hunting for Criss; ma said

he wouldn't come to our house, as we are too poor, and said he was down in town," said the oldest.

"God bless you dear children, he shall come," said Mrs. M., and continued "And where is your ma and pa, to-day?"

"Oh! dear lady," responded the oldest child, "my ma is very sick in bed and will die, they say, but pa is a bad man, for he gets drunk and gets us nothing to eat and ma is too sick to bind shoes now to get any money."

Joe acted with indifference toward the little strangers until his mother removed the half-worn boots and shoes from their sockless feet, which were blue with cold and here and there great creases were laid open and raw, which, had their blood been warm it would have flowed copiously. Their feet were placed into some cold water in order to extract the frost from them, and they were given some hot coffee to drink, and their natural feelings were restored again.

Warmer clothing were placed on them, and socks on their feet, for which they expressed their deepest gratitude with tearful eyes. Placing her hands on each of their heads, Mrs. Means said, with tears in her eyes:

“God bless you dear little lambs, and redeem and finally save you and your cruel father.”

The little strangers were then seated at the table, which was burthened with all the luxuries which are seldom obtained but by those of affluent circumstances, and they partook eagerly of the good things with a relish that did the Means family much good to witness.

They felt as though their gifts were, for once at least, properly and appropriately bestowed. Heretofore it had been their custom to give precious gifts to their wealthy friends and relatives, and of taking no thought of the ragged, starving poor. Even Joe's acrimonious mind and feelings seemed to re-

solve its primitive inclinations into that of a punctilious humiliation.

Language nor sculptor could successfully describe or depict the magnanimous flow of happiness derived from this simple scene.

On the table at which the children of poverty had for once an honorary seat, were arranged numerous fruit dishes filled to their uttermost capacity, with costly confectionery. The children were permitted to indulge freely of the dainties while at the table, and were given a large assortment to take to their homes besides.

Henry was dispatched in haste to secure a sleigh to take the little fellows to their home. He soon returned with a beautiful two seated sleigh, drawn by two spirited nags, and after wrapping up the poor little fellows warmly, Mrs. M. nestled them down in the front of the sleigh, as cozy as you please. Mrs. Means had a curiosity within her to better understand their condition in life, so she took pas-

sage in the sleigh, as did Estella and Stanley also, who had already manifested their determination to accompany them, by seating themselves in the sleigh. Off they went, rapidly gliding over the snow, the senior of the three little ones piloting the way.

They seemed to enjoy the novelty of the occasion very much for they would look up into Henry's face, their beautiful bright eyes would sparkle and occasionally they would laugh merrily. Out in the suburbs of the city the little guide pointed out a rustic and partly dilapidated hut, instructing them that it was their humble home.

Henry drove up to the gate and they all alighted from the sleigh and quietly entered the house. Cleanliness and neatness were clearly visible. There were no accumulated piles of dirt, and poverty itself looked respectable. On a clean old-fashioned bedstead lay the children's poor sick mother. She was very weak and her countenance gave

evidence of deep trouble. Mrs. Means approached her bed and taking hold of her thin, boney hand, she said:—

“Good evening, dear lady, how do you feel to-day?”

The invalid attempted an answer but failed in the act. Her eyes filled with tears which tracked each other over her careworn cheeks, and Mrs. Means dried them with her own handkerchief.

“I am pained to see you undergoing such discomfort of mind and body,” continued Mrs. Means.

“Ah,” said she, “I shall soon be at rest. This withered form will soon know no more pain. It will not be long until it shall be consigned to its mother dust, and, I trust, this spirit of mine shall sweep through heaven’s portals, washed in the blood of the Lamb.”

“But,” said Mrs. Means, “you may survive your expectations. I trust you may for your dear little children’s sake.”

As soon as Mrs. Means mentioned her little children, she was completely overcome for a short time, when she finally made this pitiful reply:—

“My children! ah, yes; I would like to live longer on their account. They have been the acme of my life since their existence, but if I must go, I go willingly, leaving them in the unerring hands of Providence, who hath promised to be a father to the motherless. For a number of years I have supported them with my needle, binding shoes and whatever my hands found to do, and oh, how my heart aches for the dear little souls.”

She could say no more as she was interrupted by choking sobs. The name of this unfortunate lady is Everts. She is a woman of unusual intelligence, and was once a school teacher of very high grade and continued in the profession several years until her union with Samuel Everts. Her husband is thought an irretrievable sot, for his earnings all go

for liquor and is now incarcerated in the city jail to await the action of the court for a misdemeanor which happened during his holiday debauch.

Mrs. Everts did not know when her children left home to go in the city, as she was asleep, and seemed very much astonished on learning the history of their exploits while there. Her countenance brightened, giving expressions of a grateful heart when the children exhibited their presents, both in clothing and eatables, and she repeatedly thanked Mrs. Means and her children for their benevolence.

Just as they were about to take their departure, Mrs. Means gave the sick lady two five dollar gold pieces, saying:

“This is your Christmas present, to be used as you may deem best, for yourself and children. I shall not dictate, since you certainly know best.”

She took the bright pieces from the hand

of the donor and, could say nothing at all; she grasped the giver's hand fervently, and wept for joy. They parted, promising that some of the party would call again on the morrow.

After they had gone some distance from the scene, Mrs. M. remarked:

"If we are so fortunate as to find your uncle Henry and cousin Ella at home, when we arrive, my joys, for once will be complete."

Stanley and Estella remarked in unison:

"Our joys have been fully realized."

After arriving at their home and in the act of divesting themselves of their wraps, the doorbell summoned the servant to the door. "Who comes?" they inquired of each other. Willie availed himself of the opportunity of peering through the door ajar, and reported—"a lady and gentleman." The servant soon escorted them to the sitting-room, as the parlor was secured against intruders, as it

contained the Christmas tree ladened with precious gifts, and under Mary's supervision. It was indeed Uncle Henry and Ella that had come. On account of the long journey, they said they were very tired, and said they would like to retire soon after dark, that they might rest. It was then suggested by Mrs. Means that the Christmas-tree exercises be postponed untill to-morrow, which was agreed to by them all. Well they did too, as uncle Henry and Ella took an active part, not only in the exercises, but in the bestowing of gifts also, as will be shown further on. Had they disposed of the Christmas-tree fun that evening, perhapse their esteemed visitors would not have taken the part they did.

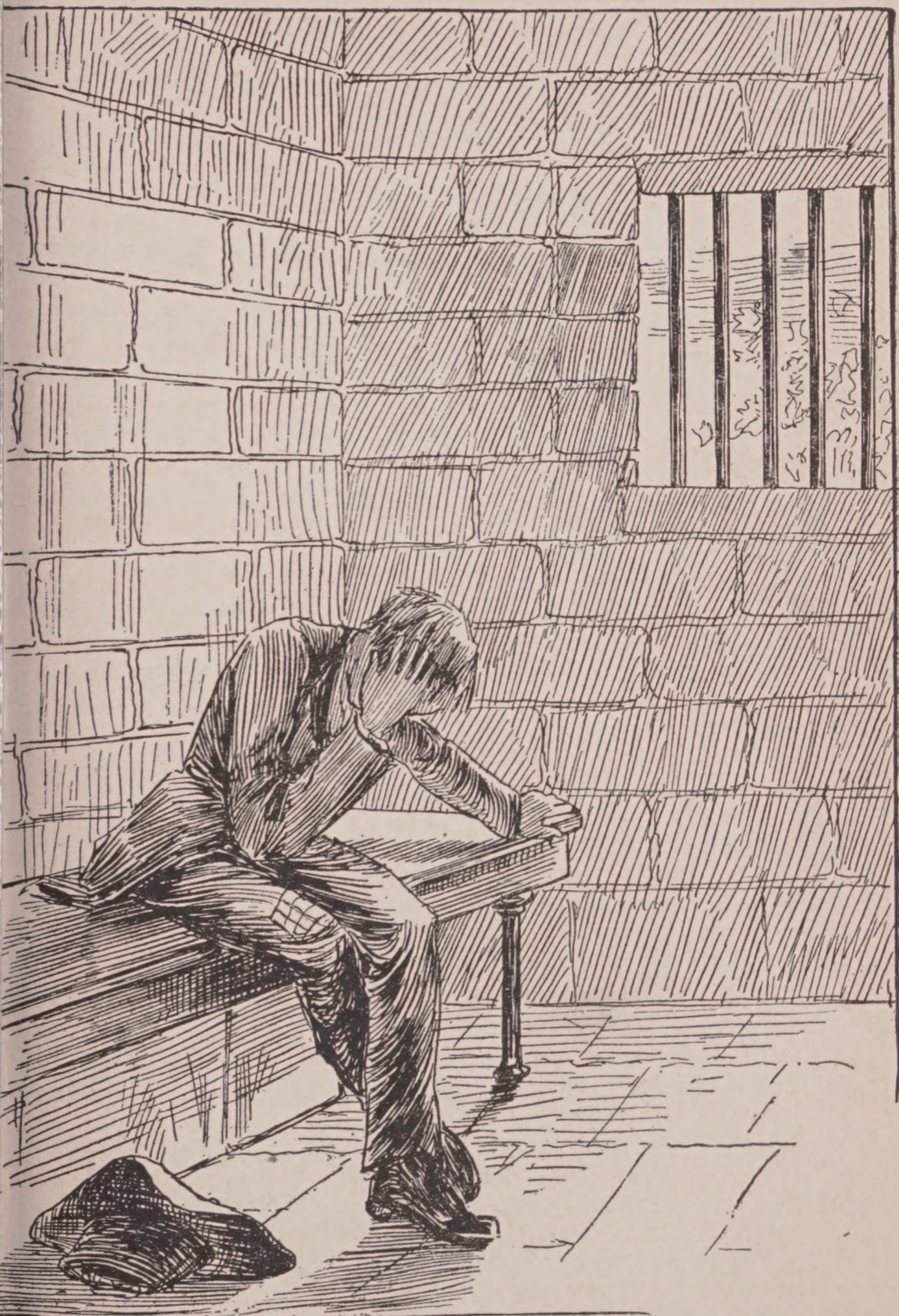
CHAPTER V.

"I SHALL make a strenuous effort to be cheerful to-day," said Mrs. Means, as she entered the dining hall after Christmas, next morning; "but then," she continued in a choking voice, "I feel as though I can never conquer that consuming grief that is crouched within my breast."

"But why should it continue longer?" asked the servant. "You certainly can realize the fact that a cultivation of that kind of feelings are repugnant to your happiness. You should nerve up, and endeavor to fortify your mind against the disastrous approach of such unhappy feelings."

"I have endeavored to do this," said Mrs. M., "but my mind will continually revert to the old trouble again."

Mary listened wearily, then said; "My



"HE WAS SUPERINDUCED BY HIS RAVENOUS APPETITE FOR LIQUOR,
HENCE HIS ENTHRALLMENT BY THE LAW."—CHAPTER V.

dear, you lack faith and will power. Did you not enjoy Christmas day?"

"Perhapse I have not the required faith and will power, I should have. Well, yes, I did enjoy Christmas-day very much indeed, but then my mind was continually employed all day, and you know that is a great help to one almost forlorn."

"Forlorn! ah, forlorn!" said the servant, "is it possible you have a forlorn hope? Oh, no, certainly not this. I beseech you earnestly Mrs. Means, to endeavor to burry the things of the past, and look not on the dark side of the picture, but may the bright side reflect on your future pathway continually."

"Perhapse I do borrow trouble unnecessarily," said Mrs. Means; I shall endeavor to profit by your most excellent advice, Mary, but then, if you could solve the misteries of my discordant nature, you would be more mitigating and sympathetic toward me."

"Sympathetic! no one can feel more so

than I am. I can't express my deep sympathy in words. I was in great hopes that uncle Henry and Ella's visit here would prove a complete restorative to you" continued Mary. "Come let's be cheerful and make the best of our conditions. Breakfast will soon be ready. Wonder if uncle Henry and Ella are up yet? It is a pity to disturb them; I know they must be very tired, coming so far." It appears from the conversation between Mrs. Means and Mary, the servant girl, that Mary was prepared for her on this occasion and condignly met her mistress' arguments and, in rather a cool way from that she was accustomed to. Probably Mary imagined that her mistress' daily repetition of this kind of conduct was mainly to elicit her sympathies and to enjoy Mary's pet names which she so liberally indulged in on similar occasions. Mary was indeed a true Christian girl, having been a member of the Baptist church a number of years, and, not

only had she a name in the church, but she practiced what she professed, in her every day life.

Mrs. Means did not remain long in Mary's presence, however, but returned to other parts of the house, arranging for the comfort of her guests, against the severities of the weather.

Uncle Henry arose about 7:30 A.M., and prepared himself for breakfast. Coming into the sitting room he recognized the absence of his daughter, and fearing the long journey had made her ill, he began an investigation, and was pleased to learn that she and Estella were sleeping sweetly side by side. The loss of sleep and bodily exertion by both of the girls had been instrumental in the production of a comatous feeling they could not well overcome. They were permitted to enjoy their rest until 8 A.M., when they were summoned to their morning meal, which they had to enjoy all alone as Uncle

Henry and the family had indulged their appetites in a bounteous feast while they slept. After all had satisfied their appetites, the question must be disposed of as to wheather they should enjoy the Christmas tree fun or, first pay their respects to the poor, sick Mrs. Everts.

Mrs. Means was anxious to obtain uncle Henry's opinion as to which would be the most advisable, and, in order to ascertain his judgment on this point, he must be interrogated, so she put the question:

"Uncle Henry, don't you think the wisest plan would be to visit the Everts family first, this morning, and pay our tribute of respect to that poor invalid lady and then we would be better prepared to enjoy our Christmas-tree exercises at home? I feel very anxious about that poor, good woman, and want to do what I can for her.

I fear she will die and leave her sweet little bright-eyed children if something is not soon

done; and oh, what will be come of them when left to the mercies of a drunken father and cold-hearted world. I really enjoyed my visit to the Everts' hut yesterday and feel like repeating it again to-day."

Uncle Henry straightened himself up and a feeling of anxiety was depicted on his countenance and his dark eyes glowed as if with heavenly radiance which already indicated an affirmative answer before he had time to elucidate his thoughts on the subject.

"Remember the poor, help those in distress, feed the hungry and clothe the naked, are sacred injunctions as revealed by the inspired scribes of ancient times, and we are duty bound to honor and respect them," said uncle Henry, and continued, "I see no reasonable excuse for deferring this matter any longer; you know that procrastination is the thief of time, therefore it behooves us to be up and doing, as the days are of brief

duration, and to-day is rapidly being measured by the swinging of time's pendulum, and eternity will soon smile on another day's subtraction from time. The voice of the suppliant poor, beseeching those of affluence to alleviate their strained abilities by a mere pittance, should receive an immediate response from the rich or well-to-do citizens of any community. What is it to be poor? What to be hungry, yea, even starving? What to freeze from a lack of sufficient fuel and clothing? Who can portray, or even imagine such a scene as this? And yet, we have the reality, and none but they who suffer, can imagine it truly. Since you narrated to me, on my arrival last evening, the sadness of the event disclosed to you yesterday, my heart has given a sympathetic response to it, and I long to render them assistance as early as possible. Just imagine such a scene, how horrifying within itself. Three poor little bright-eyed urchins, in the habiliment of rags, looking, as they

expressed it, "for Criss," and their poor mother suffering, if not dying from the neglect of a brutal husband and father. How many tears has her sad, broken heart caused to stain her pillow, no one can compute.

Ah, when we remember she is a good christian; she has many stones of remembrance along her pathway of life, that are memorials of Providence's love, and now from the depth of her troubled soul, her cries ascend heavenward, and answer will come. "The Spirit of the Lord" will lift up His standard, and victory will come.

The invalid ladies husband, oh! where is he! Ah its sad! In an unguarded moment he was superinduced by his ravenous appetite to indulge in the use of strong drink, until he was, temporarily, a bedlemite, and, during his absence of reason he committed the crime, hence his enthrallment by the law.

His heartless example should be a warning to others, but it will not effect them in the

least. We have been talking here too long and loosing time: I shall order a livery rig immediately, and we will first go to the grocery and provision store and procure a goodly number of eatables and replenish their scanty stock."

Uncle Henry was not long securing a livery steed, and they were soon off on their mission of charity and love, after visiting the grocery and store. They drove up quietly to the hut, for fear of exciting the poor sick lady. Mrs. Means knocked for admission which was soon granted her, and was heartily welcomed.

"You seem much improved in health since our visit yesterday," said Mrs. Means, "your countenance is expressive of a more cheerful heart than yesterday too."

Before Mrs. Means could say more, the sick woman burst into tears and said:—

"Ah, dear lady it's bad enough yet. See those little children there? I would like to

be spared for their sake. Some how we are having Luck in Disguise, and I am exceedingly anxious to understand this matter perfectly, as there is an enormous expence attached.

Some kind and loving benefactor has furnished a physician for me, and he refuses to explain matters, or enlighten me in the least, and will only say in reply: "Take my medicine as I direct and you will be restored to health again," and his medicine is helping me continually; and not only are we having Luck in Disguise, in a medical sense, but, we are daily in receipt of a great many valuable articles, such as groceries and dry-goods, and I am anxious to know who the donor is."

Mrs. Means smiled and refused to enlighten her also, as to whome it was. She put her off with the remark:—

"I am glad for you, Mrs. Everts, that you are enjoying such Luck in Disguise, even if it be somewhat mystified to your mind."

The sick lady was so overcome, she covered her face with her hands and sank back on her pillow and wept.

“Weep not, dear lady, God is a merciful father and he will take care of you and your children, in all your troubles.”

“Oh,” said the invalid lady, “there’s a little history connected with my life that you are unacquainted with. I can give it to you briefly—and—well—” Mrs. Means interrupted her by saying:—

“My husband’s brother from Nebraska is with me, and he is very much interested in your welfare too. I would like for him to hear also. By the way, we have the pleasure of presenting you with some Christmas presents, which we trust will do you much good.”

They began carrying in the tea, coffee, sugar, meat, flour, etc., etc., and a lot of useful dry goods, until they had completely filled a table and a small bench besides.

Then Uncle Henry gave the sick lady a five dollar gold piece. Mrs. Everts could say nothing but "God bless you both."

Having at last conquered her excited emotions and gained her controlling powers, she continued her history as follows:—

"When I was a girl, I enjoyed all the luxuries of common life; at the age of sixteen I began teaching school and continued in that profession until my union with a young man by the name of Samuel Everts and who is my husband to-day.

"He was one of the most beautiful young men I ever saw in all my life; in fact I worshiped his bright eyes and lovely face, and he was so industrious too. He worked hard and made lots of money and, if he had any bad habits I never heard of them. After we had been married over one year, the family was increased to three, the little stranger being a nice plump and beautiful boy baby: We called his name Samuel, for his pa. Mr.

Everts was too proud of him and was never too tired, when he came from his work at night, to take a romp with baby before he asked for his crib, to go to sleep in. At the age of one year, he took the brain fever, and after lingering one week, his little angel spirit winged its flight to Him that gave it. I really thought my husband would go mad, for he acted so strangely, and in one week from baby's death, he came home staggering drunk and he has since kept it up. Did you notice that fine two-story house with iron fence enclosing a small front yard on the corner above here? This was ours two years ago, but it went for liquor. All my efforts to redeem him were vain. I spent several years in the school room and saved my earnings and, with what little he could raise, we invested it all in this fine property and had it clear of any and all encumbrance; but now both property and money are gone, save this old hut, which is in my name and

shall remain so as long as I have life in my body."

After Mrs. Everts had finished her sad story, uncle Henry gave her some excellent christian advice which closed that day's visit at the Everts' hut, and they felt satisfied with their morning's work. They returned home and, after they had dined they arranged for the Christmas-tree, the exercises for which were entrusted to uncle Henry and he was never known to shrink from duty. The four boys were the committee on securing and arranging the tree, which was previously done in good taste. Estella and her ma also took a prominent part in the arrangements but Mary, the servant, was given the honors of arranging and marking the presents and securing them on the tree. No one knew what was on the tree for them but the giver and Mary, until their names were called out, and the gift received. It was as they intended it, a surprise. Not one of the

family had access to the tree since they began to burden it with gifts. Mary carried the key of the parlor, and took charge of and arranged the gifts according to her own good taste.

Everything being in readiness, Mary unlocked the door and they all marched in, and seated themselves around the room and uncle Henry proceeded to read an appropriate lesson from the bible. The distribution of the presents were then in order. Believing Mary the best hand for to hand out the gifts, as she arranged them on the tree, she was unanimously elected and she filled her office admirably well. It would be useless and consuming too much time to attempt to enumerate the list of presents given on that occasion. It was simply immense. The candies, toys, nuts, novelties and valuable articles made the children's hearts leap with joy. Some of the articles of great worth were as follows: Uncle Henry gave Henry a hand-

some gold watch, partly on account of him being called Henry. Uncle Henry gave them all something, even to Mary. Mrs. Means received a handsome bible, Estella, Ella and Mary received from uncle Henry each, a new dress, Joe was given a purse containing a five dollar gold piece and Stanley and Willie each received a pocket-knife and some spending money. Mrs. Means also remembered them with precious gifts. She gave the three girls each a fur cape and new dress and other minor articles, while the boys were remembered with a new hat each. From the boys conjointly, Mrs. Means received a very handsome cloak and the three girls together presented her with a \$25 set of furs. The scene was then closed by uncle Henry, in a few valedictory remarks:

“Yesterday” said he, “our hearts were made sad while contemplating the situation of the poor Everts family, and yet we were made to rejoice, at the same time, when we

thought of our willingness and ability to help them in their poverty and how grateful they were to be helped. In this we have seen the old adage varified, which reads: "It is more blessed to give than receive." Having discharged our christian duty, in helping those in distress we were better prepared to enjoy our home amusement. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

“THERE is something sublime in the return of the New Year. Its announcement seems to incite our very being to action and merriment. Our last years vows are renewed and new obligations taken or made; our lives are reconsecrated anew, and we begin a new, a holier life. We look about us and lo! our hearts are made sad again by the unoccupied space once filled by those dear and near to our hearts, but whose precious spirits have passed into the eternal space beyond.”

Thus spoke uncle Henry on the morning of the New Year after family worship had been participated in. They all seemed to appreciate his brief little talks very much, but Joe, who would much rather his uncle had indulged in smart sayings or read some fairy tail instead of the bible lessons he would

select and read. As we have said before, Joe is not such a bad boy as the reader might imagine, but he is "chuck full" of life and fun and bible lessons are too dry for him.

New Year's day was one of beauty and splendor; a little cool, yet very clear and bright all day. The sun seemed to shine with unusual splendor and everybody seemed to be infused with a spirit of alacrity and true jolity. Indeed the streets of Chicago were a scene of spirited commotion from early dawn until an unusually late hour at night. During the day the poor Everts family, were remembered by uncle Henry and Mrs. Means, in the bestowing of gifts. They have made frequent visits to Mrs. Everts since Christmas, to inquire after her health and administered to her unavoidable necessities each time.

We are happy to inform the reader that Mrs. Everts is convalescent, and on New Years day, she was permitted to be up and

to enjoy a sumptuous repast at her own table, with her husband and children, and in the morning of said day, *i.e.*, the first day of the new year, Mr. Everts affixed the name of Samuel Everts, in a bold and unmistakeable hand writing, to a temperance pledge, and on his knees he asked God's forgiveness for his past insults and violations to and of his most holy laws. He arose from his knees and embraced his wife and children, impressing a kiss on each of their cheeks, while the tears of repentance flowed freely from his eyes, and the tears of unspeakable joy traced each other over the troubled face of his invalid wife. Mr. Everts made many encouraging promises to his wife and uncle Henry and Mrs. Means.

Uncle Henry and Mrs. Means returned home again with light, cheerful hearts, feeling their mission had been one of profit and love.

“If that poor man redeems himself and re-

mains true to his solemn obligation, as he promised God, on his knees he would do, it will be a marvelous act indeed," said uncle Henry, on their return home, "but," he continued, "all things are possible if God wills it. No man or woman can fall so low in the scales of morality to defy God's power to redeem him and bring him back again."

Mr. Everts is a skillful workman and commands the highest wages paid for the best mechanical work, when not drinking. In fact he is a natural genius—can do most any thing he undertakes. The only thing necessary is to place the material, for the construction, at his command and then tell him what you want and in a very short time you can have the desired article, providing he keeps sober. He "turned over a new leaf" and went to work at his trade, on the second day of the new year, and has so fortified his obligations to abstain from any and all kinds of liquors, with resolutions and pledges, that

he could not be induced to touch much less drink it.

The stability of his will-power will be put to a test, no doubt, unless he severs his associations from those of his former kind and should he fall again, he will, no doubt, be forever lost.

We will now leave Mr. Everts, for the time being, and return to the Means family.

A letter was recently received from Mr. John Means, who is in Boston, which announced his intentions to return home the first of next week, which is a little premature by one week or so. The production of the letter for uncle Henry's perusal, brought out the first unpleasant look on his countenance, as well as keen, cutting words, since his sojourn with them. It was ascertained upon investigation by Mrs. Means, that Henry had disclosed the glad tidings of uncle Henry's visit with them, which was an open violation of uncle Henry's inclinations, fearing it

would detract much from his enjoyment with uncle Joe.

“He will come since he has the forbidden information, there is no alternative for it now. I have a great mind to telegraph him to remain his full time, and beat the young man in such tricks,” said uncle Henry in a semi-scornful voice.

Henry scanned his uncles countenance closely as he uttered these words, at the same time exhibiting a regretful look as well as that of indifference; the union of these two obstinate expressions seemed to express a feeling of surprise and disgust with Henry, although he said nothing just then. Joe’s sympathies were with Henry and in rather an impudent way he responded saying:—

“I can see nothing criminal in the action at all; it was done mainly through respect for you, uncle Henry and Ella, knowing that pa would appreciate your coming to see us very much, but, on the contrary, if you don’t

want to see him, cause him to remain where he is."

"We do want to see him badly" said uncle Henry and Ella in unison.

"But," said Ella, "the superfluity of the act may be summed up in these words: We contemplate remaining here an unlimited time, and will not return home until we have fully enjoyed our visit and seen all of your family, if it takes all summer, and your pa is on limited time, having told you he would return in three or four weeks. We long to see him very much and can wait his coming very well, and should he remain his full time at uncle Joe's, we would have but a few days longer to wait. I am really sorry this unpleasantness has happened."

Mrs. Means listened to the drift of the conversation nervously, and fearing the tendency of their talks might prove dileterious to the acquired affections of Henry for his uncle and cousin, and, in consequence of

which he may object to making his western trip, so she remarked: "I am quite sure John will not care, no doubt he has been homesick long ere this, and if he is not homesick, we are exceedingly anxious to see him, and he has been from home long enough for once any way. Now all get your books and lets have some more good music, similar to last evening, which was hard to beat."

Ella and Estella are superb singers and Henry has a natural bass voice, yet not an expert at reading music. He is like many musicians of to-day, knows enough to think he knows it all. The music never sounded grander and the enchanting strains rang out in the most harmonious concord and in approved rhyhm. The unplesantness was soon forgotten and never again resurrected by any member of the party.

The next morning many commiserate remarks relative to Mary were indulged in by all of the inmates. It seems as though, prior

to this, no thought was ever indulged in relative to Mary's over-worked condition. They all enjoyed the delicious feasts she spread for them three times a day, never stopping to think what a wearisome task it was to do so. Mary was not cognizant of the intense sympathy her wearied and troubled countenance had engendered in the hearts of those she served. So great were their sorrow, they became compassionately tender toward the poor girl, and Ella and Estella attired themselves in proper clothing and entered the kitchen to do service under Mary's most excellent supervision; but she met the girls with a sweet smile, and insisted on being left alone in the kitchen. Her request was not granted, however. The girls went to assist her and they remained with her too. Their presence somewhat frustrated Mary, having never been accustomed to having help, but Ella was no slouch in the kitchen, as she was raised to work in that capacity, but Es-

tella knew nothing about work of that kind as it was never required of her by her parents. Ella was indeed a great help to Mary, as she could do anything in that line, but Estella's room was better than her company to Mary and Ella, yet they allowed her to remain to gratify her. The day passed pleasantly and each successive day thereafter, the girls repaired to the kitchen and assisted Mary about her work and, by so doing, Mary's work grew lighter and she could find time to enjoy the society of the girls each day. The daily repetition of Ella and Estella's kitchen work gave the latter much valuable information and, as she learned to do the work correctly she learned also to like it, and became quite eager to learn all about it.

On Tuesday of the next week John Means returned home from Boston, bringing many valuable presents for each one. It was amusing to see the twin brothers meet. Uncle Henry and John embraced each other

as lovingly as would a young benedict his newly made bride. When John Means left home for Boston, he bade no one adieu, not even his much loved wife, but he made up for it on his return, as he gave them all an ardent embrace. They had many things to narrate to him, but if he apprehended them all intelligently, they must one talk at a time, for they all kept their tongues going at once, which is enough to confound the sensibilities of the strongest minds; however, it is one of women's natural propensities.

Evening came and they were all seated around a bright fire, eagerly listening to uncle Henry and their father talk on the different topics, especially of their boyhood tricks and adventures. Uncle Henry narrated a rather myrthful incident as follows:—

“Do you remember, John, when we were quite young, that when in a game of ‘hide and go seek,’ in an effort to conceal myself from the seeker, I endeavored to force my

body into an old churn, much too small for me and I was soon forced to conclude that the maker of that article had badly missed my measure, and excited beyond emotional control, I yelled lustily, which soon brought me assistance. I could neither get in nor out. Some of my rescuers layed hold on me while others managed the churn; I perspired freely all the while. Some one remarked that it is beyond their strength without doing great damage to the boy, meaning me of course. This increased my excitement and anxiety, and I began to put forth an extra effort to extricate myself from my perilous condition. I was boiling over with perspiration, for I imagined my time had come, for I could not see any avenue for to escape ultimate ruin. A cooper near by, at work, was summoned who relieved me by removing the hoops from the churn. Indeed I was so weak from the nervous shock and fright, that I did not recover my strength again for

several days. I was as white as a piece of paper and looked as though all my blood had been extacted from my veins. I soon came to the wise conclusion that churns were not intended to be used that way."

The evening was plesantly spent and they all retired, feeling that they had their full share of enjoyment of another New Years day.

CHAPTER VII.

“MY trip to Boston can better be imagined than described,” said Mr. M. as the family circled about him one cold stormy evening. “I could not do the subject justice,” continued he; “uncle Joe and aunt Mary live in grand style, as only millionaires can do. Uncle, you know, is a banker and owns a large interest in two or more railroads. He scarcely knows his worth. They were not looking for me, as you know, and consequently did not go to any extra trouble for me; and I could judge pretty accurately from their table, etc., when I first went and after I had sojourned with them a short time that their every day living discounted our extra occasions, both in style and extra quality of provisions. Servants! I never seen nor heard of the like before. The quarter of his



"DIRECTLY OVER THE BUTTONS, WERE THE WORDS IN IVORY LETTERS
'HOT WATER AND COLD WATER.'"—CHAPTER VII

number of servants would bankrupt me in a very short time with our limited means.

Before going to uncle Joe's I imagined we possessed great riches, but, like the peafowl, when I seen how helpless I was financially, when compared with uncle Joe, my feathers fell. We think we have fine property, and we have too, and our house is richly furnished, if we don't compare our possessions with uncle Joe's. Oh, how I wish I could command language sufficient to do my subject justice. My trip cost me nothing but the loss of time."

"What!" said Mrs. Means, did I not see you purchase a ticket at the depot before boarding the train here?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Means, "but uncle Joe paid it back to me again, with interest, notwithstanding. I objected to it and took it reluctantly, and when I was about to make the return trip he presented me with a first class, through ticket, paid my cab fare to the depot

from his residence and accompanied me also. Every place we went in or out of the city, it was at his expense, for he would not have it any other way. Had I notified him a fortnight before I started for his house, he would have sent me a free pass."

"He certainly must be a good man," said uncle Henry, "since you have given us such a brilliant account of our good old uncle, I feel as though I would enjoy a visit to him too, and expect to, some time, if I live long enough, and times get better."

"Yes, father, go, and take me along, I would love so much to see Boston, I know one thing certain, if you get the notion once in your head to go you will never let up untill you do go," said Ella.

Uncle Henry laughed at Ella's remark and said: "Ella seems to have a good opinion of her old father. Well, to tell the truth, I am endowed with an extra amount of firmness not congenial with most persons, and, if there

is any thing I detest, it is one with a dormant, slothful disposition, with scarcely energy enough to eat when they are hungry. I want to see any one get up and go, if they have anything to do, and do whatever there is to do with a willing heart, and show some business."

"That's me too," said Mr. John Means.

"Why should'nt I have a good oppinion of you father?" said Ella. "I have lived under your training many long years and think I certainly have a right to know you. No one can be more firm than you are, father. I learned one thing to a certainty, when you promised my back a little 'peach oil,' I always got it."

"Well, Ella, we must let up on our nonsense as we are infringing on your uncle John's little history of uncle Joe. We would like to know more about it," said uncle Henry.

"Uncle Henry," said Mr. Means, "if you

conclude to go to uncle Joe's, write him and you will receive a free pass by return mail. He is quite eager to see you, for when Henry wrote me that you were here on a visit, he said he would be so glad to see you and wished you could have been there with me. I wish we could have visited him together."

"I possess a mind too lofty and independent, John, to beg my way, by allowing him to send me a free pass," said uncle Henry.

"So you would consider that a disgrace?" said Mr. Means.

"Yes, under the circumstances," replied uncle Henry.

"I suppose then, I may consider myself disgraced, although I feel no compunction of conscience on account of it," Mr. Means.

"No; your case is a different one from what mine would be. You did not write to him for a free pass as you directed me to do."

"You are too sensative Henry, I would suppose you would look at this in a different

light. Uncle Joe is immensely wealthy and you and I are his only heirs, so he told me when there, and why not allow the old man the privilege of enjoying such gifts during his stay on earth. True, we will get it when he's gone, but, I want him to enjoy the giving while here," said Mr. Means.

"Oh," said uncle Henry, "is that the way it stands? With uncle Joe's estate annexed to ours, where would we stand in the financial circles of this country. I don't begrudge him his wealth, and hope he may live many years to enjoy his millions. I have enough to carry me through."

"You would not object to him bestowing his wealth on you, father?" said Ella.

"Oh, no, certainly not, but let's drop this subject. John, tell us more about uncle Joe's home. Does he live in the main part of the city?"

"No," responded Mr. Means, "he does not live in the city, but in a beautiful mansion

on the outskirts of the city, to which is annexed 200 acres of excellent productive land. The entire farm of 200 acres is almost as prolific as any well cared for garden, and is free from briars and weeds and no accumulated debris is permitted to remain out of place. He has an overseer that is fond of labor himself and, with the large amount of helpers, the farm is kept sandpapered, so to speak.

Uncle does not bother his head about the farming at all. The man he has to oversee his farm has been with him for twelve years and gives perfect satisfaction,—he has been delegated the power to hire help and discharge worthless laborers and fill their places with better. As I have said before, he has a large amount of laborers whose duty it is to feed stock, milk, attend the crops, garner in the feed, etc., etc., and business is just run like clock work. Uncle's house is constructed of fine white marble, trimmed in, and orni-

mented with richly clouded marble, and stands forth in majestic grandeur. It is two and a half stories high and is most luxuriantly furnished in the best. No poor families live any ways near uncle, as this is occupied by the affluent business element of the city. For their special benefit a trak was laid, sometime ago, for street-car accomodations, and uncle can step on the cars at his front gate and off again at the door of his bank. Uncle Joe and the wealthy business men of this part of the city are the principle stockholders in the street railway of the city. Seeing is the only correct way to form an idea of what his true worth and situation is, as it can't be described satisfactorily in words."

One need not become lonesome nor homesick while at uncle Joe's, as there are so many peculiar and attractive things and objects in and arround his residence to amuse and instruct the eye. There are numerous

fountains and waterworks of every conceivable shape and kind, on his lawn, and they seemed to be perpetual as no part of them ever stopped their flow or action unless some parts of them were out of order, and the two men assigned their management soon adjust the disabled parts and they are soon set in motion again. Hot and cold water pipes run through every room, from cellar to attic and one can have access to them by simply pressing on a small button. Directly over the buttons are the instructions in ivory letters, "Hot water," over the other, "Cold water," and one need not make any mistakes in securing the kind wanted. I told uncle Joe that he had everything arranged so convenient it was calculated to make one lazy. Anything you might want could be obtained without scarcely any effort on your part to get it, and one could not have enough exercise of body, to keep up a healthy circulation of the blood. But, one can have all the ex-

ercise he wants if only he will. There is, in another part of his premisses, a shady, well cared for spot where one can engage in a game "Cricket," "La Cross" and other ball games. As old as uncle is he enjoys the sports as much as any of them—his jimp make up backed by his energy renders him an expert at all the amusements. He also has a gymnasium where he can amuse one for an hour at a time with his athletic exercises. He is as nimble as a frog—you would be surprised at his dexterity. He also has bathing pools and bath houses for either sex and everything is arranged for pleasure and comfort about the premisses."

"Well, well," said Ella, "your little speech, uncle John, has completely captivated me. I want to go to see uncle Joe more than ever. Father can't we go this spring?"

"Who said you was going with me Ella?" said uncle Henry laughing. "I have made up my mind to go some time, if I live, but

can't leave this spring, as this will be a very busy spring with the farmers."

"I would advise you, by all means, to go some time," said John Means.

CHAPTER VIII.

“I WILL tell you, uncle Henry, why I am so anxious for Henry to board with you next summer,” said Mrs. Means, as she and uncle Henry were alone, with Ella, one morning in the parlor. “I fear the society into which he is naturally drifting will eventually prove detrimental to his good morals, if not ruin him, for liquor, I believe, will do this in a very short time and——”

“What!” interrupted Ella, “does Henry quaff from the maddening bowl?”

“I have every reason to believe it is only too true,” returned Mrs. Means, “and, that is not half, although it alone is bad enough,” she continued.

“Well,” said uncle Henry sorrowfully, “I believe he could not go to a better community than that in which I live. I wish he might

go and remain a year or more, I shall do what I can to retain him, when once we get him out there."

"How about John, we must first convert him to our arrangements, since he has not given his consent, as yet," said Mrs. Means.

"Oh, we can talk it into him," replied Ella.

Uncle Henry laughed at Ella's remark and said: "Yes, Ella is right, let a woman demand a thing and man may as well surrender. I will help to 'talk it into him,' as Ella has it. We will read him the law to-night, when we become settled from all business cares and make this a new and special business, and give him to understand that we mean business and that he must be subservient to our requirements. We will allow Ella to introduce the subject in a round about way."

"All right," said Ella, "our plans are all in proper shape now, if only his propensity be favorable to them."

“Liquor! liquor! Oh, how I detest the name,” said uncle Henry, and continued; “it has ruined thousands of bright, beautiful youths who would have made their mark in this world for good, had it not been for the curse of strong drink. Sarah, will you explain what you ment by saying that liquor was not half? I would like to know it all.”

“Oh! uncle Henry, my heart has been big with sorrow, almost beyond endurance, and my eyes were nightly suffused with tears. I was so troubled I did not know what to do, so, I most wisely, therefore, resolved to supplicate Divine protection and guidance and to enter into covenant with God. In this, I found relief. I believe the plan for Henry’s western trip was brought about in answer to my earnest prayers. I prayed for some means for Henry’s redemption from the pending ruin.”

“What!” said Ella, “what do you mean?

Let us know the worst, as you have very greatly excited our curiosity."

"Be patient Ella, and you shall have the rest," said Mrs. Means. "Not far from here," she continued, "is a large family of young ladies, by the name of Scroggins. Their parents are both dead and the girls do sewing for a living, which is no disgrace, whatever. The girls have a bad reputation for misleading young men and even boys like Henry. They have repetedly induced Henry to enter their home and retained him until a very late hour, and I fear he is acquiring a knowledge of card-playing and learning to drink and other vices, under their training. It has worried me so much that I feared sometimes my reason would be dethroned. It may not be so bad as I imagine and I hope I am mistaken."

"Just at this point they were interupted by Mary, the servent, who came to announce dinner. The morning had winged its flight

with unusual velocity and dinner was not thought of yet, for their minds were completely engrossed in their plottings. They did ample justice to the occasion and eat their meal with a relish that seemed unnatural. Mr. Means seemed to be full of jolity and fun, and just as they were wishing in their minds that he would continue thus jubilant until their night session, when they could "read him the law," as uncle Henry has it, Mr. Means addressed his son, Henry, saying:—

"I suppose after next week shall have slipped into eternity, we will have one vacant chair at our table. What day do you think of going, uncle Henry?"

"We would like to start on Wednesday or Thursday at most, as it will require about two days to go. Do you think that will give you ample time to get Henry ready for the trip?"

"Oh, I don't suppose it will require much

of an effort to get him ready. He can come to the store and select his clothing required all ready made, as we keep them constantly in stock. I have not heard what arrangements his mother has made or wishes to make."

Mr. Means then returned to the store again and not until then did Mrs. Means return to the dining-hall, as she was feeling badly.

On entering the dining-hall, Mrs. Means' face was lit up and cheerful looking, and all smiles, and they all had a good hearty laugh over their mystified success. All their plottings were useless to them now.

"I was completely dumbfounded at John's remarks at the table," said uncle Henry, "as it was so unexpected to me. I knew he had been asking a great many questions relative to our climate, the country, the society etc., but said nothing regarding Henry's going home with us. What has come over him all at once? It seems that all the good deeds

done in this country are wrapped up in much mystery."

"I feel like I would make a good Methodist this evening. I feel like shouting, glory! glory! glory! This is what I call 'Luck in Disguise.' Wonder if Aunty didn't work this case up for us? If she did she shall have a nice new dress sure. It is settled, Henry can and will go. I hate to give him up, but believe it is for the best."

"Uncle John lifted a wonderful weight off my mind, when he indulged in that most welcome conversation at the dinner table," said Ella, "as I have been planning and plotting all the morning, how to introduce the subject, as I had been assigned the unpleasant task."

The two women, alone in the parlor, were enjoying the results of the morning hugely. After Mrs. Means had finished her remarks, she advanced toward Ella, grasped her hand ardently and then in each others embrace,

they wept tears, not of sorrow, but of rejoicing and joy. A burden had been removed from their aching hearts. While Ella and Mrs. Means were in the hottest of their rejoicing, the door opened and in stepped uncle Henry, much to the women's surprise.

"Hello! what does all this mean?" said uncle Henry.

"Don't ask such a question as that pa, for, how can we help rejoicing?" said Ella.

"A mill-stone has been rolled off my heart, and I feel so light and happy," said Mrs. Means.

"While leisurely strolling down street, I thought of your remark relative to 'Aunty working up this case for us,' and I could not get the consent of my mind to go any further so, I turned round and retraced my steps here again. Aunty might have been instrumental in bringing this thing about, but, the hand outstretched in prayer, is a hand leaning upon the arm of a covenant. Although

Aunty might have been the instrument used to bring it about. Let's give God the glory and make no mistake."

"You are quite right, uncle Henry, I had not thought of that. We learn from holy Bible, that 'God uses the weak things of this world to confound the mighty' and, it may be that the all wise Ruler has selected Aunty to bring about this reform, in answer to my prayers."

Uncle Henry then proposed singing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, etc." They became so unusually boisterous in their singing and rejoicing that Aunty, supposing they were having a religious service of some kind, stole noiselessly into the room and seated herself on a chair near the door. She was soon noticed and made the centre of attraction. They all gave her the right hand of fellowship.

"Bress de Lor,' fur sich a metin'," said Aunty. "Ize gwine to tell you folks Ize on

de Lor' side and haint been in sich a meetin' fur years."

"Aunty, did you know Henry was going home with us, next week?" said Ella.

"Bress your soul chil', I done knowd it long ago."

"How long ago Aunty?" said Mrs. Means.

"Mor'en a week I 'spose," replied Aunty.

"How does it come you have kept it a secret all this time? said Mrs. M.

"You see I give massy John a good talkin' to, and pinte out the great harm he was doin' to Misseff, by not letin' Henry go to uncle Henry's, and he told me to say nothin' 'bout it and he would let him go."

"I thought, Aunty, you was instrumental in bringing this about," said Mrs. Means, "I have obligated myself to get you a nice new dress for your noble work. Here is my hand. Hope you may live long, die happy and be saved."

They all again shook the good old lady's

hand and she was so over come that she shed tears of joy.

When evening came, they were all seated around a bright, cheerful fire, narrating incidents of other days. The program adapted for that occasion had been rendered useless and cast aside.

Mr. Means presented Henry with a nice little package, saying:—

“Take this to your western home with you, and use it to the best possible advantage.”

“What does it contain, father?” asked Henry.

“It is yours, look, my dear boy and ask no questions,” returned Mr. Means with a myrthful expression on his countenance.

“Henry very carefully opened the package and counted out \$200.00.

“Many thanks father, but what do you intend me to do with it?” asked Henry.

“Oh,” said Mr. M., “I am the donor and you are the donee. It is optional with me

what you do with it, only I would advise you to put it to good use. Above all my son, don't squander it in drinking and gambling.

“Drinking and gambling! I am surprised at such a remark, father, as I don't know the taste of liquor and cannot positively name more than two cards in a pack.”

This was encouraging news to Mrs. Means and quickly replied:—

“I hope this is true Henry. If you want to bring me to a premature grave, just practice one or both of these two vices and you will succeed.”

“Mother! mother! how your talk surprises me: had I the slightest intimation that the best friend I have on earth held me in suspicion I would certainly go mad. Believe me, dear mother, for I speak truthfully when I affirm that I have no knowledge whatever of either of the vices.”

Mrs. Means arose and went to Henry and

embraced and kissed him saying: "I believe you dear boy, hope you may continue in ignorance of them."

"Indeed mother I shall never taste, touch nor handle them. I promise you on honor, can you trust me, mother dear?"

"Trust you Henry, of course I can. I consider you a moddle young man. Hope you may always live a truthful, sober and honest life," said Mrs. M.

"I have been thinking, deeply thinking, and yet, I find myself in a quandary to know why you are all so anxious to get rid of me by sending me away with uncle and Ella. I am certainly not such a bad boy as to merit such cold treatment from those I love so dearly and whose society I enjoy above all others."

"Poor boy, I really pitty you indeed I do. I am sorry you misapprehend this affair. It is for your own good Henry, that we are anxious for you to go, that you may see something of this world, and not be continually

cooped up in this one city where you can know nothing of the outer world. I think I would embrace such an opportunity gladly and esteem it a great honor bestowed on me. What do you know about fruit grow in, only as described in picture and print?" said Mrs. M.

"I do not know uncle Joe, and neither does he know me," said Henry, "and I fail to see the propriety in him saying—'it would be the making of me,' to go on the proposed western trip. You will remember pa wrote this home to us while he was in Boston, and what did he mean anyway?"

"Well, Henry," said Mr. Means, "I am sorry you have a disposition to censure our good old uncle for an innocent remark, in which there is not the slightest harm. I was boasting, if you must know it all, of your richly cultivated mind and what a fine scholar you were etc., and then told him that your ma was anxious for you to rusticate with your uncle Henry, during the hot weather."

“Oh, is that all?” said Henry, “I have misconstrued his expression. I believe I would like to go too.”

“You can come to the store to-morrow, and select some clothing to suit you,” said Mr. Means.

The next day Henry visited his father's store and selected two fine suits as directed, and while Henry was securing his clothes, uncle Henry and Mrs. Means made their final visit to the Everts home and returned again bringing glad tidings. Mrs. Everts is able to attend to her domestic affairs and her husband has been true to his obligations.

Wednesday of next week was the day set to start for Nebraska and all hands were busily engaged getting ready for the final day. Henry seemed in good spirits now and longed for the time to come when they should start on their journey and his mother felt as though she had won a victory at last, and brought on Luck in Disguise.

CHAPTER IX.

RAP! rap! rap! was heard at the front door the next morning about 9 o'clock, and, before the signal could be answered by Mary, the door-bell rang, indicating much haste in the intruder. Mary soon answered the summons and reported, on her return that Mr. Sharp, the druggist, was in waiting and desired to see Henry on a little business.

"Business! business! what business do you suppose the old whiskey bloat can have with Henry? I shall find out, or know the reason why. I shall forbid Henry even passing the time of day with the old rascal. I will go and see him myself," said Mrs. Means.

Trembling with excitement, she arose from her chair and with difficulty, made her way to the front-door and opened it and was soon confronting the object she detested so much.

“What is wanting, sir?” was the salutation she gave him.

“I wish to see your son Henry, on a little business,” was his reply.

“My God! what business can such a man as you, sir, have with my son, I would like to know? Does he owe you anything?”

“Please, maddam don’t address me so abruptly—I am a man of prominence.”

“A man of prominence, indeed sir, your very looks clearly indicate to the contrary. Judging from the hundreds of human wrecks you are making yearly out of our young men, you are indeed prominent in Satan’s harness, and nothing more.”

“Maddam, you slander me; do you know the penalty? Don’t you know I occupy a very conspicuous position in one of our leading churches of this city? I am a S. S. Superintendent, Trustee, etc., and yet, you would brand me a villain. I warn you, beware.”

“Sir, you know I speak the truth, when I denounce you a publick villain, an inch by inch murderer. A worse calamity could not be thrust on a church and no sin so excruciating to religious worshipers as you are, in the position you occupy. I declare further, endeavoring to weigh my words as one that must give an account, I would rather be the man you place in the gutter than you, in your busines, dealing out death and distruction to the young and using the church for a cloak, to hide your iniquities.”

“Woman, you are dementated and know not what you say, I did not come here for a lecture, I simply came to see Henry.”

“No, sir, my mind was never sounder and better then now; as to my lectures, they are free. You have failed to enlighten me—I asked if Henry was in debt to you?”

“Is your son in, I wish to see him?” said the druggist savagely.

“When you answer me directly and cor-

rectly, I will then answer you, sir," retorted Mrs. M.

"What else do, or can you infer from my remark, that, I wished to see him on business?"

"You have acknowledged then, indirectly, that Henry really owes you some money. Will you do me the kindness to state the amount, as I want him to settle all just claims against him before he departs."

"My claim against him maddam, is \$5.00."

"So much as that?"

"Yes, maddam."

"I can't understand why he is in debt to you one cent," said Mrs. M.

"Oh, he and I understand each other perfectly," said the druggist.

"Yes, I suppose so. You had better see his pa and explain matters," said she.

"My dealings are not with his pa but with Henry alone."

"Oh, sir," said Mrs. M. ringing her hands,

“your impudence will drive me mad. I demand that you explain matters to me here now. How dare my child do a thing he would be ashamed to tell his mother, who is his best friend.”

“Does your son necessarily have to explain every thing he does or says?”

“No, not everything, yet he should not be guilty of any thing he would be ashamed for his mother to know.”

“I disagree with you there, as boys of Henry’s age will engage in innocent ‘pass-times,’ such as a social game of cards, and perhaps bet a small amount of money on the game, of course he would not care about you knowing it, especially if he is the loser, yet there is not particular harm in it Lady.”

“Did you not say a short time ago,” said Mrs. M., “that you was a man of prominence, a S. S. Superintendent, a church Trustee, etc., and yet you have the cheek to stand before

me an uphold anyone in the practice of such vices?"

"I did. Convince me where in an innocent game of cards are wrong."

"Oh, man! though you be a watcher and guider of precious human souls, your instructions means eternal death. You are doomed to the 'bottomless pit,' of Perdition, as you deserve to be. To a sensible man, an argument in favor of cards and other gambling being a gross, outbreacking sin and an insult to God, would be useless indeed. I would not know where to begin to prove card playing a gross evil, as it is wrong from beginning to end."

"Are you sure your son is not an expert card-player, and would you object to him playing a quiet, civil game, just for amusement?"

"I have his word for it sir, that he does not know one card from the other, and I believe him, though you may testify to the

contrary. I should object to him even looking at gambling cards, much less touch or handle them.

“Since you are so sanguine in the innocence and perfection of your son, I will inform you maddam, that \$2.00 of the \$5.00 that is justly due me from your son, is borrowed money, actual cash, that I loaned him.”

“What for?” said she.

“To bet on a game of card playing,” was the reply.

“Great heavens! a S. S. Superintendent loaned my son money to encourage him in gambling? Can it be possible that my son is an impostor? I shall take no stock in your remark, until I see further.”

“Very well, just as you like about that, maddam.”

“I suppose the other \$3.00 you would say was for liquor,” said she.

“That is correct, maddam.”

“You are a fine specimen of humanity, in-

deed. You set your vile frame up as an example for the young, claiming to instruct them in divine things, on Sabbath day and the other six days you deal out death and damnation to them, doing six times as much to eternally ruine and banish the celestial jewell, than you do to save it. Churches are too lenient and easily pleased with such rascals as you are. It is the cash they realize from you that encourages them to retain you in office, and ministers will compromise with Satan, by smoothing over and covering up your crime for fear of loosing the few dollars you pay for their support, and protest against an investigation of your crimes, thereby, not only jeopardizing the souls of others by permitting you to hide under the christians cloak, but, endangering their own souls as well. I am of the opinion that a man in the drug business should not have any ruling power in a church, as they will almost invar-

iably, sell more liquor than anything else as there is not a living in drugs alone."

"I have told you all maddam, will you answer me according to promise? Is your son Henry in?"

"No, sir, he is out in the city somewhere. Your claim is not a just one, if it is as you have represented it to me. I shall protest against him paying all such bills as that. Do you understand the situation? I also demand that you immediately leave these premises and never set your unholy feet on them again, under any circumstances whatever."

"Maddam, I go as you suggest, but, let me first say—your son honestly owes me the amount I have specified and he shall pay it or I shall do my worst, and he will——."

Mrs. Means gave two or three piercing screams and swooned away on the floor. She lay there as quiet and motionless as though inanimate. Uncle Henry and the family hearing her pitiful cry, as if for help, rushed to

the scene, as did also a policeman who happened to be passing by. A large crowd soon met upon the scene.

The girls, Ella and Estella, could not be appeased, but kept up screaming—"Oh! mother! mother! he has killed you, what shall we do—how can we give her up, etc.?"

Mr. Sharp hastened away as fast as possible, but was soon overtaken by the Policeman and arrested and lodged in the station house.

A physician was summoned to investigate Mrs. Mean's case and, upon investigation said—"my patient has unfortunately received a severe blow on the side of her head and, I am not sure but that her skull is pretty badly fractured. She is very weak from a loss of blood and I think will soon rally again. Every thing must be kept very quiet as she will be very nervous and easily excited, when she regains consciousness."

As soon as help arrived, Mrs. M. was taken from the floor and placed on a bed in her

room, where she will be kindly cared for. Thus, in a very short time, a happy home, a home of rejoicing was turned to mourning.

The policeman who caused Sharps' arrest, after turning over the prisoner to the authorities, returned to learn more about the case.

"Is the lady much disabled?" asked the Policeman.

"The doctor says she received a very severe blow on the side of the head and he is afraid her skull is badly fractured," said Uncle Henry.

"I told the prisoner I seen him strike the blow, yet he will insist that he never struck the lady at all. I told him he would have to face the music as my eyes did not deceive me and his denial was gauzy."

"Did you see what he struck her with?" inquired uncle Henry.

"Yes," said the policeman, "it was a very heavy hickory, and loaded, at that."

"I wish you had have retained it for testi-

mony aganst him," said John Means, who had just heard of the affair and come to see about it.

"I have it secured in the Clerk's office and will bring it forth in due time," said the policeman.

"Don't you think Sharp was intoxicated," inquired John Means.

"His breath was strongly perfumed with whiskey, yet he knew everything and tried to argue with me that he was innocent and that he only had the cane across the back of his neck, and, when I thought he did the striking he was only lowering the cane from his shoulder to the ground. The mark on the side of the lady's head condemns him sure."

"I mean to see the fullest extent of the law in this case, sure as I live," said Mr. Means, as he paced the floor in great excitement.

"You are right about that, I would make it hot for him if it was my wife. No doubt

but he will endeavor to get off on a plea of drunkenness," said the Policeman.

"That will not work, you bet," said Mr. Means.

Signs of life had returned to Mrs. Means, yet she knew nothing at all.

Mr. Sharp was released on \$500.00 bail and had to keep himself concealed as public sentiment against him was waxing hot as the news spread. Strong talk of lynching him was agitating the minds of the infuriated citizens and, to show himself to the Means family would mean death.

Henry returned home soon after the excitement occurred and was very much worked up on account of it. When he was informed that he was the principle cause of it all, he remarked:—

"The old villain; I don't owe him but 25 cts. That was for two cigars and one cake of soap. I would not have been in his debt that much but, in changing garments before going

down in town, I neglected to change my pocketbook and hence, had no money with me, and had the articles charged to me."

"He said you borrowed \$2.00 of him, as near as I could catch the remark to your ma, to bet on a game of card playing," said Uncle Henry, "and the other \$3.00 was for liquor I believe. Now, this was the way it sounded to me, when I eavesdropped."

"The old scoundral lied: I never was in debt to him but 25 cts. in my life. Jack Jones borrowed \$2 of him one night to bet on a game and in a joking way, after he had secured the money, he asked me to go his security and I said all right, and he also treated the boys to \$3 worth of drinks same night."

"Now, is that correct Henry?" said his pa.

"Yes, pa, it is correct. I can't see why he should come on to me for the money when Jack is good for several times that amount. Had I owed it, he would have been deprived

of the painful duty of running me down to collect it," said Henry.

"Have you settled for the cigars and soap yet?" demanded his pa.

"Yes, I suppose about the time he was here abusing ma this morning, I called into his drugstore and cancelled the account. The clerk said nothing about me owing for anything else and that was the time. I told him I called to settle."

"Well, Henry, I was indeed surprised when I heard the report," said his pa, "you know you positively told us you did not know but two cards in a pack and did not know what liquor tasted like. I hope you reported truthfully."

"Father, father, do you doubt my statement? You understood me correctly: I said it, and I reaffirm, calling God to witness my sayings, that I know nothing at all about the taste of liquor and know but two cards in a

pack. Oh, believe me father, I would not tell you a lie, no, no."

"I believe you Henry. I never knew you to tell a lie in your life and hope you never will. I would advise you to allow him to collect the \$5.00 from Jack Jones or lose it. Never make or pay a gambling or liquor debt my son."

"Don't give yourself any uneasiness about me gambling or drinking, father, as I have had ample opportunities to learn them both and have spurned them all."

"I can't see why you allow yourself to congregate in such a detestible den as he is said to keep any way."

"You see, father, every young man, and lady too, have their associates—I have mine too, you know, and they will go in this drug-store occasionally in order to pass the time, and of course I accompany them, in order to enjoy their society. This is natural and easily understood. This man is well named

—he is pretty sharp, as he is always throwing out inducements to draw and trap the young.”

“You should spurn this man Sharp, as you would the most venomous reptile. His society is poisonous and dangerous,” said Mr. Means.

“That is straight goods, father, I am frank to admit, yet, you must remember and consider without levity, that boys are boys and will do many things they should not do. I have always looked upon Sharp as a very bad man.

“Your arguments as all very good Henry. Will you promise me one thing and that is—never to be found in the society of such a man again?”

“With all my heart father, I do promise this.”



"AS TO HENRY DRINKING, I NEVER KNEW HIM TO PUT A DROP OF LIQUOR
IN HIS STOMACH."—CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER X.

ELLA addressed a letter to her mother, in Nebraska, telling her all about the brutal treatment her aunt had undergone and informed her that they would not start for home until her aunt was out of danger, and the affair was adjusted in perfect satisfaction.

In company with uncle Henry, Henry called at the drugstore of Mr. Sharp and demanded of the clerk, an explanation—why he was charged with \$5. and what for, calling on uncle Henry as a witness to all they said and done.

“What do you mean Henry, you called sometime ago and settled your bill?”

“Will you please explain to this gentleman here with me how much my account was and what for?” said Henry.

“Certainly; but what’s up? There is some-

thing unusually the matter—I can't understand." Turning to Henry's account he said; "Here is your account in black and white and it is only 25 cts., being for cigars and one cake of soap."

Turning to uncle Henry, Henry remarked: "Is that satisfaction uncle Henry?"

The drug clerk became very much excited and thought there was a move on foot to bring him to accounts for some of his perverse actions. The affair was a current topic yet, the young drug-clerk was infuscated on the subject or, he seemed to be very ignorant, however.

"Well," said uncle Henry, "I can't understand about this \$5. business. Mr. Sharp claimed that Henry, had borrowed \$2. in cash, of him and owed him \$3. for drinks. Will the clerk please explain how this is?"

"Well, stranger, I suppose you are a detective," replied the drug-clerk, "and you have come to the wrong place as Henry

Means was never in debt to this house but 25 cts. in his life and that is settled. As to Henry's drinking, I never knew him to take as much as one drop of any kind of liquor into his stomach and he never has even treated anyone else to it either. He has frequently bought peanuts, candy, cigars, water-mellons and chewing gum to treat the boys and always took the same in returning the compliment. If he ever borrowed \$2. of Mr. Sharp, I never heard of it, and I am satisfied you are laboring under a great mistake."

"Where is Mr. Sharp?" said uncle Henry.

"Well, as the boys call it, 'he is off on a bender,' and has been drinking pretty hard for some weeks. There seems to be great trouble on his mind and, I tell you sir, I don't like the movement of things arround here. Everything is wrapped in mistery."

"Is it possible," said uncle Henry, "you are ignorant of what has happened? You are badly mistaken when you brand me a

detective. I am no detective and am not working up any case."

"I confess my ignorance. What's up, any way?" said the drug clerk.

"Since you seem to be in darkness on the subject, I will not go into details, but simply state for your benefit, that Mr. Sharp called at Henry's fathers a day or two ago and said he wanted to see Henry on business and, in the conversation he said Henry was in debt to him \$5, for borrowed money and drink account, and Mrs. Means, I guess, preached his funeral and he, Sharp, struck her on the head with a loaded cane: he was arrested, gave bail and is running at large. Mrs. Means is still unconscious. He will get the fullest extent of the law, for his folly."

"I am at the first of the trouble," said the Clerk, "yet, I knew by his actions he was a guilty man. Your object then, was to find out if the \$5 was a just claim or not, I suppose, was it?"

"That is why we have called," replied uncle Henry.

"Well, I am here to tell you it is false. The old man must have been crazy drunk. He has been so cross and overbearing of late, that we can scarcely get along with him. A man that will strike a woman ought to be prosecuted."

Henry addressing the clerk said: "I can't account for that \$5 business only in one way—you remember one night, that Jack Jones borrowed \$2. from Mr. Sharp and booked \$3. worth of drinks and, after Jack had secured the money to bet on a game of cards, in a joking way, he asked me if I would go his security and, not thinking he meant what he said, I replied all right. Don't you think I am correct?"

The clerk then turned to Jack Jones' account and there he found it in black and white:

To Cash, loaned Jack Jones, \$2.

Liquor, " " \$3.

secured payment by HENRY MEANS;

"That explains it all," said the clerk. "You are a fool Henry," continued the Clerk, "if you ever pay Jack Jones' account for him, under such circumstances, as he is amply able to pay many times that amount and never miss it either."

"You are right," said Henry, "it will be a cold day in July when I pay any liquor or gambling bill. I don't indulge in either of them and will not countenance them, much less encourage them by contributing my little cash."

"That's right," said uncle Henry, at the same time patting Henry on the shoulder, "that is right my lad, stick to that, it is a good resolution. I never thought you guilty, yet, as you was so willing to prove your innocence I felt it my duty to assist you. I am perfectly satisfied now."

After thanking the Clerk for his trouble and information they bid him adieu and returned home again. They were pleased to find

Mrs. Means much improved and conscious, though very helpless and nervous, as the doctor had told them she would be when she recovered. Henry advanced to his mother's bedside and inquired after her health. She opened her eyes and looked him in the face and said: "Henry, is it possible that your waywardness has brought your poor mother to this state of affairs?"

"No, no, mother dear, I am not guilty," and he was completely overcome by choking sobs: he sank down on the floor and gave utterance of his grief in boisterous crying. Uncle Henry requested Mrs. Means to be quiet and dismiss the subject from her mind, as she was too weak to weary her mind with it, at the same time he informed her that he had made an investigation of Henry's case and found him as innocent as a babe. This satisfied Mrs. Means, as she had great confidence in uncle Henry's word.

Uncle Henry and Henry had not been

from Sharps' drug store more than one hour when a messenger boy entered the store and handed the clerk a note which read as follows:

“Chicago, Ills., ——

To Henry Meads, Esqr.

“Sir: As soon as you master the contents of this missive, you will do me the kindness to lock up the store securely, and call on me at my place of residence, as I have some business of importance to disclose to you. I fear I am a ruined man Henry, and desire your counsel and advise. Please destroy this as soon as you read it and tell its contents to no human being. Yours truly,

Joseph Sharp.”

The missive read, the clerk secured the doors of the drug store and made haste toward the residence of Mr. Sharp and there he found his employer in the second story, walking the floor and his countenance was

the picture of distress—he had such a wild, crazy look.

As soon as Henry Meads entered Sharp's room, the first thing he said was:

“Is she yet alive, Henry? Oh, don't tell me she is dead, I can't stand the shock.”

“To whom do you refer, Mr. Sharp? said Meads.

“I refer to Mrs. Means, that poor, weak mortal, that I am charged with an attempt at murder. You certainly don't read the papers—they are full of it.”

“Indeed! It is a strange case. Everyone seems to know something about the affair but me. Henry Means and his uncle called this morning to make an investigation relative to that \$5, you said Henry owed you and I could not find but 25cts. against Henry, on the books.”

“Oh, pshaw! don't you know he went Jack Jones security for \$2 borrowed cash, and \$3. book account, for liquor? I tried to

collect the amount from Jack and he sent me to see Henry Means. I heard Means was a going to go West so I thought I would go early. I had better have sacrificed the \$5."

"Are you guilty? Did you strike the lady, Sharp?" said the clerk.

"No; I am not guilty, and did not harm her, unless my talk did. If I should prove in court that I am not guilty, and the court declares me innocent, I am a ruined man any way it goes. My business influence is gone; my religious and moral influence gone also.

"What, then do you propose doing? I trust your case is not so bad."

"Some months ago, you will remember, some of the hot-headed temperance people of Chicago, got their cash together and tried to buy me out, but, they struck me in the wrong time—my business was too prosperous just then. Now, I want you to call and see Major Ross, as he was the leading one in the gang, and have him call and see me as soon

as possible. If I can sell immediately, I will skip before the day set for trial. The Policeman, who arrested me, will swear, he saw me strike the lady, because he happened to be looking toward me just as I was lowering my cane from my shoulder to the ground, and the lady screamed and fainted at the same time. Now, if, Mrs. Means will also swear that I struck her, my cake is dough. If she is a woman that prides herself in her veracity, she cannot be induced to swear that I struck her or laid the weight of my finger on her person."

"The case all hangs on Mrs. Means veracity then," said the clerk.

"That's right. If you hear any talk about me one way or the other, tell me."

"All right," said the clerk, "shall I attend to the this business immediately and do you expect me to inform the Major why you solicit his presence?"

"Here is \$10; now, attend to it as soon as

it is possible and tell no man, not even the Major, what I want with him. I wish to do all the talking myself. If you ever did anything in a hurry, do it now," said Sharp.

"Well, I am off now, for the major's," replied the clerk.

"Good day sir. I hope you will do me good service, and tell no one," said Sharp.

The clerk took a straight shoot for Major Rosses residence and soon delivered his message. The Major was not very much elated over it, however, and, at first refused to go, as whiskey venders were beneath his notice.

"What does the old rascal want with me sir?" inquired the Major.

"I can't answer your question Major, as I am under promise not to."

"Well, I suppose he wants me to go on his bond or, help him out of this scrape in some way," said the Major.

"No; you are very much mistaken in your conclusions, Major. Go and see him as early

as possible, and I will assure you, it will do you no harm if it does you no good," insisted the clerk.

"Well, I will go and see what he wants any way. I am quite certain he will be disappointed if he is expecting aid through me, on this Means scrape. He deserves to suffer for the meanness he has done in the past, in this city, and I would not turn my hand over to prevent it," was the Major's reply.

"You say then, you will go, and that soon?" eagerly insisted the clerk.

"Yes, I shall call and see him soon as I can go," replied the Major.

The clerk then left the Major's presence feeling he had done his part, and done it well, for, had it not been for his persuasive arguments, the Major might not have went. Delivering the message alone would not have been any inducement for him to go, perhaps.

Minutes seemed almost like days to Sharp, he was as restless as a fish out of water. He

endeavored to kill time pacing, walking to and fro across the room. His actions were indicative of a dementated tendency and was growing to be allarming. The clerk returned to Mr. Sharp's and informed him what the Major had said, and asked Sharp to recomend him as a worthy clerk, to attend the business of the store, which he, Sharp consented to do, and the clerk went home feeling pretty well over what had happened.

CHAPTER XI.

THE day for the trial of Sharp, for an attempted murder came at last and everyone seemed interested. The respectable people of Chicago were sanguine in the belief that Sharp was guilty of the charge and were anxious that he be brought to justice, but the liquor bummers and men of bad repute were loudly declaring him innocent. From present indications, should the case go on, there will be a hot fight on either side, notwithstanding the preponderance of testimony is on the side of the prosecution.

Mrs. Means is only able to sit up and is perfectly rational. The lawyer representing her side, is one of the ablest in the state, while the defense has a weak corps of legal advisers, and young in both years and experience. Sharp was a bad man and had been

very annoying to the better class of citizens. He used the church for a cloak to cover up his meanness, simply because the church tolerated him. Frequently complaints were made against him and every time the officers of the church refused to investigate his case because he, Sharp, would tell them he only sold liquor on prescriptions from M.D's., in good standing and then, he made such a good S. S. Superintendent to. They imagined that his place could not be filled again should they loose him, forgetting that his business and influence together had a worse effect to do harm and send precious souls to perdition, than a half dozen preachers could overcome for good, in the saving of souls, etc. He had the confidence of the preacher and officers of the church. Well, when the case was called, Sharp was not there; the bondsman twisted and squirmed and became very much excited. They asked for an extension of time until they could make an in-

vestigation as to his where-a-bouts—this was granted by the court and an officer dispatched to look him up and re-arrest him and bring him back for trial.

This being the last case on the docket for that week, the judge adjourned the court for one hour and a half, believing this would give the officer ample time to make the investigation and return. The officer first went to his drugstore and found it in running order and the same old clerk behind the counter, but no bummers and suckers lounging around. Those around the store had a sober, honest look and one could pass in and out of the building without being knocked headlong by some staggering inebriate.

“What has come over Sharp, that has caused him to make such a change about these premises? I have frequently passed here when the pavement was so crowded with staggering men, one could scarcely get

a past without being jammed terribly," asked the officer of the Clerk.

"Oh, ha, ha, ha," laughed the clerk. "Where have you been all your life Rogers. Is it possible you have not heard of Sharp selling out to Major Ross & Co. This is a strictly temperance drugstore now. You could not get liquor for love nor money unless you proved, beyond a doubt, you really needed it.

"Well, it pays to run business on temperance principles if it has such a desirable effect. Well, this is immense. Look her clerk, can you tell me where I would be likely to find Sharp? His case was called up for hearing and he was lacking, so the judge gave us a little recess of 1½ hours to look after Sharp."

"Well, sheriff," said the clerk, "I hardly know where to tell you to go. You might find him at home perhapse."

"Look here Meads, I want no fooling in this matter as I am on limited time. I can

see by your eye you are lying to me—you look guilty.”

“What interest would it be to me to report to you falsely?” said the clerk.

“Sure enough unless he has bribed you not to give him away or, perhaps he has secured this position for you again if you would help him by not telling what you know. If you don’t tell me what you know about this matter I will arrest you for an accomplice in this matter.”

“Great heavens!” said the clerk, “please sir, don’t get me mixed up in this matter. All I know about it would do you no good.”

“Well, be quick about it sir,” said the sheriff, “if I can’t get Sharp I must take you, if you don’t disclose to me the truth.”

“Well,” said the clerk, “here is all I know about it several days ago Mr. Sharp told me he was not guilty and if Mrs. Means respected her veracity she would swear he never struck her, or ever attempted to, but,

if she has no respect for truthfulness and she and the policeman both swear I struck her, the case will go hard with me. In view of the uncertainty in the matter, said Sharp, I propose selling out and skipping the country, and that is all I know about it."

"Are you sure that is all sir?" said the Sheriff looking him in the eye.

"Yes, quite sure," said the clerk.

"Perhaps he has gone then, if your statement be correct. I shall go to his residence and inquire for him."

"My statement is correct and I would be willing to make oath to it."

In the mean time, while the sheriff was on the lookout for Sharp, Mrs. Means' lawyer held a secret conference with the judge, relative to Mrs. Means' deposition he had taken down just before the case was called for hearing, as she was not able to appear in person. She testifies under oath, that Sharp never struck her at all, but so frightened her with

his terrible treats against her son Henry that she became so deathly sick that she fell and struck her head on the door stop, and she never knew anything more until the next day. The Sheriff returned and reported, that Sharp had sold out and skipped the country. The Judge then assessed a damage of \$100.00 and costs. The sheriff went to work to try to collect the damage and cost and soon had the satisfaction of reporting a cash settlement for the entire amount. Sharp had left home, 'tis true, but left a large sum of money to pay damages and cost. It seems strange that no one seen Sharp depart from the city and yet, not so strange either when we consider that Sharp was known in Chicago as a middle aged man and in his disguise one would suppose him about eighty years old. Mrs. Sharp detested the sale of liquor and had frequently told her husband that the liquor traffic was unjust and money obtained in that way was "illgotten gains," and would

do no good for those thus obtaining it. Mrs. Sharp and her family shipped their goods and selves in a few days, and the citizens all rejoiced when they heard that Sharp had gone for good, as he had been a great annoyance to the city—misleading the young men, etc. One and all, of the respectable circles, declared that this meritorious move was certainly luck in Disguise. The bondsmen were all released after Mrs. Sharp had advanced the cash for prosecution and damage and they too rejoiced that everything turned out so encouraging.

Mrs. Means improved rapidly and was completely out of danger now. Fears were entertained that blood poison would be the result from the bruise on Mrs. Means head, but it healed up nicely and she thought in a few days Henry could make his proposed western trip. Henry, Ella and uncle Henry were all ready now, to start on a moments warning.

Henry could not think of going West until

his mother was able to be about again. Uncle Henry has set Wednesday, three days hence, to start for home providing Mrs. Means is able.

Ella again announced the time to her ma, by letter, that her pa had set to start for home. Mrs. Means is more like herselfe again and is moving about the house in rather a lively mood and indulges in many jocular sayings that brings out many mirthful expression on the countenance of the young. She claims the honors of closing out one bad liquor vender of Chicago, and doing good work for her country and God, even if it was at the peril of her life.

We neglected to say that Mrs. Everts called frequently to see Mrs. Means during her late affliction, and, while she was so bad, Mrs. Everts remained up with her all night and administered to her wants. The poor lady felt under obligations to Mrs. Means for her timely assistance and kind administrations to her wants when she lay suffering with no

one to care for her or even sympathise with her. She not only owed her restoration to health again to Mrs. Means but, also the reformation of her brutal, debauched husband from a drunkard's hell, and reestablished a happy home for her. For all this she felt greatful. Mrs. Means is always found doing good for her fellowmen—giving alms, or in some way alleviating those in straitened circumstances.

Well, the day for their departure for the West, came at last and, as Mrs. Means seemed quite well again, they all three got themselves ready and went to the depot. A large crowd of young and middle aged friends met at the depot to grasp the friendly hand and pronounce the last farewell. Henry kept in pretty good spirits until his mother embraced and kissed him with the injunction—"be a good boy and don't forget your mother." At these words Henry burst into tears as he boarded the coach. How many young men remember their mother's behest to-day?



"THEY WOULD BE AT HIS SIDES AND ALL ROUND HIM, SO HE COULD
HARDLY PEDESTRIANIZE."—CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY being the burden of our narrative, we will now leave the Means family at Chicago, and take our reader in imagination to the home of uncle Henry, and the present home of Henry.

We will not attempt a detailed description of uncle Henry's fine residence and surroundings—suffice it to say he has a beautiful two story frame dwelling and elegantly finished at that. The surroundings are superb. Henry was completely captivated with his new home at first sight and imagined farm life the happiest pursuit a man can follow. The almost innumerable flocks of sheep, the large herds of cattle and swine, horses, chickens, etc., occupied Henry's thoughts so completely that he could scarcely be induced to remain in doors. Uncle Henry had been

noticing what an interest he manifested in the stock, especially the sheep, so he thought one day he would help him to cultivate a taste for stock raising, by donating him some of the extra lambs, so he said:

“Henry, if you will accept and take full control of those five lambes in the stable, you can have them for your own. The women folks will furnish you all the milk you need for them and, besides these you can capture ten more and place in the pen with them, if you will make the selection from mothers having twins, take one and leave one with the mother. This will be a good start on the road to fortune. Now let’s see what you can make out of them.”

“I certainly would be very foolish to reject such a generous offer,” said Henry: “I most gladly accept the gift and will endeavor to manage them as profitably as I can under your directions.”

Henry’s face was all smiles for several days

and he felt as rich as though he had heired a thousand dollars. Day after day Henry fostered and cared for his little pet's equal to any fostermother, and he and they became very much attached to each other—indeed too much so for Henry's comfort, as he could not go in gunshot of them but what they would be at his side, and all arround him until he could scarcely pedestrianize at all.

Uncle Henry seeing with what interest and delight he manifested in the care of his pets, concluded to add others, but not of a like species. This time his aim was to reward him for his dilligence in his new calling. Henry was not afraid to work, although he was not raised to it, and his inclinations were always free to the free exercise of his great strength. Uncle Henry always kept a very large herd of cattle, and the manufacture of butter and cheese were engaged in on an extensive scale.

In his herd were a number of calves that,

from a lack of time to attend to them properly, should they confine them as they ought to be, they were permitted to run with their mothers day and night, and consequently lessened their supply of milk.

“I don’t wish to enthrall your freedom or overtax your energies,” said uncle Henry, “but, if you think you can attend to more pets you are welcome to cage six of those calves, until you have learned them to drink milk of their own accord, when you can turn them on grass.”

“You don’t mean to give them to me too, do you uncle?”

“Yes, they shall be your own, if you will take full charge of them.”

Henry was very much astonished at his uncles extravagant gifts and could not understand what it meant. With rather an excited emotion he said:

“Without compensation, uncle, for neither sheep nor calves?”

“Yes,” said uncle Henry, “you are welcome to them—I would rather not have the calves at all as to have them ruin the cows by continually running with them. I ask nothing only that you give them the necessary attention they will require.”

The next day uncle Henry, his two sons, Charley and John, assisted Henry to separate the calves from their mothers, and Henry was as proud of them as though they were each worth a thousand dollars, and he and Ella learned them to drink milk in a short time. Henry arose early and retired late and was willing to do any kind of work there was to do.

One beautiful morning in the latter part of March, uncle Henry told Henry he would like to give him a little private counsel, and after Henry had fed his pets, they both bridled and saddled a couple of horses and went over the farm. Coming up to a beautiful hedge fence of osage-orange, Henry remarked:

“Is this yours too?”

“Yes,” said uncle Henry, “On either side of this fence belongs to me. Six years ago I purchased this one hundred and fifty acres of land, at a cost of \$25.00 per acre, and have frequently refused \$35 and \$40 per acre for it. It has a good two story frame house and barn and other out buildings.”

“Isn’t it a lovely location,” said Henry. “The soil too, how productive it appears and, judging from the heavy yield, it don’t deceive its looks. You certainly got it very cheap indeed.”

“Could I induce you to settle on this place?” queried uncle Henry; “just speak the word and it shall be yours. It is not often one can just speak a fortune into existence. Don’t you think you could stand \$15 per acre with your own time to pay it?”

“That is cheap enough sure, but where is the money to come from I would like to understand?”

“Do you see that stately mansion over yonder? its owner is among the wealthiest men of Nebraska. You can get several thousand dollars from him if you wish,” said uncle Henry, feeling assured he was making his point, much better than he had anticipated. Henry looked his uncle square in the face, and a feeling of anxiety was depicted on his countenance as he said:

“He would not let his money out to strangers unless he was well secured, and I could not blame him I would demand the same.”

“But,” said his uncle, “I have a plan where by you can obtain all the money you may want, of him, without security. You must remember young man, he has as fine a girl as ever walked in shoe-leather. I hope you catch my thought, Henry.”

Henry was indeed no fool and did not require knocking down to take a hint. Laughing he remarked:

“Oh, you don’t expect me to batch, providing I purchase this farm. I think I am rather young to begin talking matrimony.”

Let me say here, that Henry had seen Miss Kate Yorkley and was badly smitten on first sight yet, he did not want any one but his old friend, Ella, to know anything about it. Ella was his adviser and secret counselor and she was also Miss Kate Yorkley’s best friend. They were always together when they were not engaged at their work.

Uncle Henry then told him of the many compliments passed upon him by the young lady and her father too, but, much of the information had been disclosed to him, on a previous occasion, by Ella, and was not newst to him: it only affirmed what Ella had told him. He had not heard of Mr. Yorkley’s good opinion of him and this was most welcome news.

“You can just put this farm down in your mind’s book of remembrance, as belonging

to me. I will take it on your most liberal terms. I believe in getting the cage before the bird. Now, uncle, do your part. I shall consider you my affiencer, to help me through with this. I fear my ma and pa will consider this a wrong move and if they should hear of it, and object to the arrangements, I could not and would not disobey them. They have been so good and kind to me and I would not bring them down to a premature grave from grief. I would suggest that they be not advised of the affair until it is all over with and then their objections would come too late to avail anything."

"You are very wrong in your conclusions, Henry, regarding your parents objection to the arrangements, under the circumstances. You are not only getting the beautiful Bell of Nebraska, but a large fortune also, and they would be very foolish to object. I think they would do what they could to consummate the plan, if they understood the whole mat-

ter perfectly. We will keep it from them though."

"You don't get my thought uncle, I supposed they would consider me too young to take a helpmate, for, should I marry inside of a year I will not be 19 years old and I think myself that is too young."

"Never mind about the age," said uncle Henry; "you have your growth and you are a man all but in years. That will be all right."

That very afternoon Miss Kate Yorkley came over to spend the afternoon with uncle Henry's family, or we might say with Henry, since she seemed to enjoy his society more than anyone else. Henry and Miss Kate became well acquainted with each other and I believe were both smitten. Henry and Ella went nearly home with her that evening and Henry made arrangements to call on her soon.



"WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THIS UNUSUAL EXCITEMENT? AH! THE ANSWER
SAYS—ITS LOVE!"—CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE evening soon after Henry's arrival in Nebraska, he made a friendly call on Miss Kate Yorkley, he having been introduced to her some few evenings previous, at Uncle Henry's home. Henry was not too young to love, in fact it would be a hard task to name the limit of "puppy love," as it is generally called. Henry's affections had advanced beyond the first degrees and had settled down to genuine busines. He determined the first time they met, that he would endeavor to effect an affiance contract with Miss Kate, at his earliest convenience and, to do this to perfection, there must be an initial effort on his part. The call, to which the readers attention is called was the test, or, the beginning of an anticipated betrothal, so far as his intentions were concerned.

Henry Kring, a fine looking young man in the neighborhood, yet of very limited education, had been paying his respects regularly to Miss Kate. Henry had been advised of this fact by Ella, who kindly kept him posted on all subjects of interest and it had wearied his mind very much indeed. He wished to win the affections of Miss Kate and did not wish to incur the displeasure of her former suitor, if he was one. It might safely be said that Henry had the inside track, as Ella and Henry, assisted by uncle Henry, would bring about the desired results in their united efforts, for "in union there is strength."

Henry enjoyed the society of Kate very much while there, and by the light of the moon they took a promenade down the road a short distance—coming to a stump where a tree had been recently sawed down, they seated themselves on the stump to converse in solitude as they suppose, never dreaming that they were being shadowed.

“Miss Kate,” said Henry, “I have more than admired you since the first time my eyes beheld you. You would not object to me imprinting a kiss, to affirm my statement, would you?”

She being willing, Henry kissed her several times.

“I have also admired you very much, on first sight, and you are never out of my mind,” said Kate, when Henry again kissed her.

All this time a dark shadow was concealed in a little clump of bushes a few feet in their rear and the conversation and actions were everything else but pleasing to him, for it was Henry Kring eavesdropping.

“I am told,” said Henry, “you have a suitor and it would be useless for me to ask permission to call regularly.”

“Henry Kring, I suppose was the name of the reported suitor,” said Kate.

"Yes, that is the name cousin Ella reported," said Henry.

"Well, I only look upon him as a friend and not a suitor at all. He calls occasionally and I respect him as a friend and nothing more."

"Will you allow me the exquisite pleasure of calling on you once a week?"

"It is optional with you, but I am not worthy of the society of one so good and refined as you are. Your pleasure shall be mine."

"I hesitated putting the proposition, feeling you too much my superior in goodness and refinement. With thanks for your kind allowance I would ask you to name the evening that would suit you best?"

"Let's see; this is Tuesday evening. How would Thursday evening do?"

"I see," said Henry, "you mean to say that I am at liberty to call every other even-

ing, which will suit me. Any time you may fix will suit me."

"Well then, I shall look for you on Thursday evening sure," said Kate.

Having completed the engagement to call on Thursday evening they arose and returned to Mr. Yorkleys again. Henry Kring, who had concealed himself and heard all they had said, came out from his hiding place and was all nervous with excitement. He paced to and fro across the road, muttering to himself.

"The rascal! how I hate him! I shall be compelled to put a spider in his dumpling. Let's see; he is to call on next Thursday evening. Well, I will surprise the villain. I will go first and spoil all his expectations. I can report some scandal on him to Miss Kate. I have all day to-morrow to study out the disgrace. She only considers me merely a friend and not a suitor. I would not have thought Kate would have lied to me, for she

told me not many days before the Means scamp came to this country, that she loved me dearly. There is no use talking I'll put him out of the road, I must do it, or, the first thing I know he will have Kate for his bride, and I am left. She must, she shall be mine. If nothing else will do, I will abduct her and take her on the extreme frontier and it will do them good to find her, you bet."

He became so enraged, as he considered the matter, that he mounted the stump on which the lovers sat, and he lay his hat down and stamped it viciously at the same time he clinched his teeth and hands like a mad man. What is the cause of all this unusual confusion and excitement? Ah, the answer says, its love. The two lovers parted at Mr. Yorkleys, with the promise to meet again at the stated time, and the rejected lover went his way also. As Miss Kate stood at the front gate on Thursday evening, arrayed in her most becoming costume, and looking as sweet

as none but the bell of society could look, she was watching and waiting for her promised guest. Soon a figure appeared in the distance and she thought it must be Henry coming. Well, it was Henry but not the one desired most of all, it was Henry Kring. He rode up and alighted and entered through the gate.

“Ah, you are expecting me are you?” said Kring.

“No; I had not thought of you to-day that I remember,” said Kate.

“Got a kiss for the poor boy?” said Kring.

“Don’t you know better than that? You know I never kiss the men.”

“You don’t eh, never kissed this young Means eh?” said Kring scornfully.

“You must be intoxicated, man. What do you mean? I say No,” said she.

“No, I am sober—am never any other way, but I affirm you did kiss him and I can tell you where you did it too.”

"You are mistaken, man. I respect Mr. Means but did not kiss him."

"Where were you on Tuesday evening with him when he kissed you?"

Kate's face flushed and could not answer as she knew it was too true. She would rather he was some place else just then.

"Had you heard what a desperate character this young Means was? He did some terrible crime and came west to evade the law."

"I have heard of nothing concerning him. Do you know what he did?"

"I did not hear the particulars, but he is guilty, all the same."

"I think I perceive a little jealousy in you Henry. You know and so do I that Henry Means is a nice inoffensive young man and of good parentage. He promised me to call this evening and, if I thought for one moment he was not an innocent man of any crime illegal, I would not entertain him."

Kate was in a quandary and stood perfectly

dumfounded as she twisted and untwisted her apron string, for she knew what he said was too true. The question most prominent in her mind was, how he knew so much, for she was satisfied there was not a human being any ways near them. Again she thought, if he told the truth so perfectly about their kissing scrape, he could also have given her straight goods about Henry Means jumping the law to escape punishment for some terrible crime. She had determined to know the truth in the matter before she allowed him to return another time to see her.

“How is it Kate,” said Kring, “would you rather kiss a criminal than me, one who has always lived an honest, sober life and on whoes character there is no stain? I have always treated you with the greatest respect too.”

“Oh, Henry, hush, you will drive me mad,” said Kate.

“You will have something to go mad for

if you take up with that rascal, I am here to tell you."

"Now, look here Henry, I shall investigate this matter to my entire satisfaction and if he is guilty I shall know it and—and—well, if this is a scheme of your own, prompted by jealousy to prevent our being friends and associating together, you will hear from me in a way you will never forget."

"All right Kate, you will see how it will pan out," said Kring.

"Hark!" said Kate, "he is coming now, we must drop this subject. I will give him something to think on, when I get him by himself, this evening. He shall know it all."

"Allow me to make one request of you Kate, before I go, and that is, don't tell him where you gleaned your information."

"I cannot promise that Henry, no never; I shall tell it all," said Kate.

"Well, be sure you don't tell more than 'all'," said Kring scornfully, as he turned to

depart. Just as Kring had passed a few rods away, Henry Means rode up and alighted. Kate was drying her eyes with her handkerchief, for she could not help crying. Henry offered a kiss, but she refused saying; "there must first be an explanation of a little matter."

"What's up now, I don't understand you. If you can't give me a welcome I shall return home again. I will not intrude on any ones happiness."

Saying this he turned and went in the direction of his horse, with the intention of returning to uncle Henry's again.

"Come back Henry, I want to lay a little matter before you for your consideration. It is one of very great importance to both of us."

Henry returned reluctantly with the remark:—

"If you have anything derogatory to my character and good name let it be known, I can face a multitude of assailants."

"I was told this evening you was a guilty man," said Kate.

"Guilty of what, queried Henry.

"I can't find out only, you are guilty of some crime, and came West to evade the law."

"That is false, grossly false. There is not one word of truth in it. If you will give me time I will send to Chicago, and secure sworn statements as to my good name there. I can show up as good a character as any young man in any state. You need not take my word for it, but make the investigation until you are fully satisfied."

"I can't believe it is true Henry. You have offered everything fair," said she.

"Yes, and I intend to back it up too, with affidavits, if I live."

"Who is circulating ruinous reports on me?" continued Henry.

"Henry Kring was the only one I have ever heard speak of it."

“Ah, you might have known there was no foundation to it. It is only the fruits of jealousy, you will find.”

“That was my oppinion at first, yet I thought there might be something of it. I told him it was a jealous scheme of his own,” said Kate.

“You are right,” said Henry; “I will fully satisfy you that I am all right.”

Henry talked to Kate that evening until 10 o'clock and the next morning he was up bright and early, for he did not rest well. He laid the case before uncle Henry and Ella and asked their advise about it. Uncle Henry was much excited over it and ordered the match pony's attached to the spring wagon, for he intended to bring the rascal to justice. He ordered Henry and Ella to get themselves ready, and they all got in the wagon and went a past for Kate and then drove over to Lincoln, obtained the proper officer and rounded in at Krings.

This was indeed a great surprise to Henry Kring, when the wagon drove up. He looked savagely at Kate Yorkley, as if to say, "you will repent of this young lady," yet he said nothing as he was badly excited.

"Mr. Henry Kring I suppose?" said the officer of the law.

"Y-e-s s-i-r," was the stammering reply.

"Well, sir," said the officer, "you are wanted in court immediately, to answer to a charge of libel, in which Mr. Henry Means is the prosecutor. I hold in my hand a warrent authorizing me to take you, and only hope you will go willingly without any restraint to the law. It is a painful duty to me, for to make an arrest, but I must do my duty.

"There now," said the officer, taking hold of him savagely, "get in this wagon."

Trembling from head to foot, he obeyed the officer, and was taken to Lincoln for trial. In the meantime, however, uncle Henry and Henry had arranged and sent an explanatory

telegram to Henry's father, at Chicago, Ill's., and he hastened to obtain the desired information. Sworn testimonials were soon returned by wire, from five officers of the law, who exonerated Henry saying:—"Nothing of a criminal or any other nature can be found on record against Henry Means. We pronounce the charge against him, without foundation and false." When these testimonials were read in court, in Henry Kring's hearing, he looked as if he would sink through the floor. Poor boy, his cake was dough. After all the witnesses were examined, the Judge pronounced him a libeler and he was then asked to sign some libel sheets and the costs of the prosecution. He was glad to get off so easily as that and performed the task without coaxing or driving. He remained around Lincoln about two days when he disappeared and never again returned. Some said he went West, some South, and others were of the opinion he

went to Canada, but Henry and Kate didn't care where he went since he had caused them so much trouble. Henry went home with Kate again, that evening, and remained until a very late hour. Kate never again believed any hurtful report against Henry's character and allowed Henry to kiss whenever he felt like it. The two lovers were more than ever attached to each other. Henry made regular trips twice a week, to see Kate, and they never had another occasion to think hard of each other.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. YORKLEY and uncle Henry were among the early settlers of that portion of Nebraska. Although the country was wild and perilous to those settling there, it proved the inchoation of immense affluency to those possessing the audacity to withstand the hourly jeopardy of their lives, by the savages and wild beasts of prey. The panther, the wolf, the wild-cat, etc., were numerous and would frequently make sad havoc in a poorly protected sheep-cot, or even in the midst of large herds of cattle, and human beings were occasionally forced to flee for protection if not sufficiently equipped with protective weapons, for a threatening encounter. The Indians would threaten the destruction of their prosperity by conflagration, and even attempts were made to massacre the inhabitants. In the

midst of all these perilous aspects they continually increased in purse, all the time annexing more and more government lands to their vast estates, until they became immensely wealthy. Uncle Henry invested money in large tracts of land, in Johnson and Harland counties, as did also Mr. Yorkley. The lands were obtained by them, for very small sums of from \$1.25, \$2.00 and \$3.00 per acre, and is now worth from \$20. to \$40. per acre, according to location and improvements. These pioneers, thirty in number, completely organized their colony by adopting certain rules as a bullwark against the ravages of wild beasts, and the intrusion of the savages that infested the country. On their arrival in that country, they home-steaded the amount of land allowable by the government, and purchased several hundred acres more of government Agents. From the timbered portions they obtained material for the erection of kraals for protection.

They satisfied themselves with one small room and usually a porch, with the hope of better days to come, when they could exhibit more style in the erection of more costly residences. The colony consolidated their strength and efforts in the erection of their houses, that their union might enable them to resist any attack by their foes. Underneath their kraals were cells, or "dugouts," as they are called by frontier emigrants.

Where rock was obtainable, these cells were completely walled and arched; their interior is substantially braced by heavy timbers, that, should there chance to come an unusual weight upon the arch, the timbers would prevent any danger of its caving in upon them. In this "dugout" is kept their valuables and provisions and in times of danger it serves as a place of retreat for safety. Fire could not harm them, while in the cell, should the redman of the prairie burn their houses, as it is made fire proof. One day

after dinner, Mr. Yorkley and uncle Henry went to town shopping, a distance of about four miles, and were rather late returning. After they had road a mile from town, on their return homeward, they were startled by unusual sounds, which at first resembled in tone, that of small children in deep distress. They listened for some minutes and the pungent screams rang more and more hideous in their ears, indicating a drawing nearer to them.

Finally they were persuaded by the dreadful noise to push rapidly homeward. The moon shed forth her mellow, silver hue, beautifying all nature, and they could now see readily, objects afar off on the prairie, with nothing to obstruct their view and they resembled panthers adhering closely to their trails. They could not ascertain the nearness of their bloodthirsty pursuers, yet could see they were rapidly gaining on them. They applied the spurs freely to their horses and

greatly increased their velocity, holding their revolvers in one of their hands and with the other hand they guided their horses. On and on they went as rapidly as horse flesh could take them. Their wives had become very much excited, and even frantic, fearing some terrible evil had befallen them going to or coming from town. They listened eagerly for the sound of the approach of their husbands. At last the welcome sound was heard; they came, but not in as quiet and peaceful spirits as was manifested when they started for town. They were filled with excitement and their horses were the worse for the race. The door of Uncle Henry's house was opened wide, and the two men entered, taking their horses with them, and, scarcely had the door been shut, and made secure, than was heard the most terrific screams in the dooryard, which was soon followed by an effort to gain admission by the most terrible lunges against the door. In an effort to effect

an entrance through a window, a harvesting cradle was knocked down, which was instrumental in shortening two or three of their lives by relieving them of their intestines. Mr. Yorkley shot and killed five of these ferocious animals through the porch window. Uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley together have five dogs, two bulldogs and three bloodhounds. They were all exceedingly fierce and dangerous. The women were both at uncle Henry's to share each others loneliness and they had concealed the dogs in this cell of which I have spoken of, that they might have them handy in case of an emergency. The two families lived almost in the same dooryard, in separate buildings, yet on uncle Henry's land. One of the rules of the colony was—that in erecting their houses, two of them should be built in close proximity to each other, that assistance might be soon had in case of peril. On another occasion Mrs. Means barely escaped with her life. The Means

and Yorkley families were in earnest conversation, in uncle Henry's house, plotting their future course of pursuits, and became so engrossed in their subject, that their fire reduced to a bed of hot cinders. Mrs. Means seeing the condition of things and not wishing to confuse the men in their conversation by asking her husband to recruit the fire with more wood, threw a shawl about her shoulders, and made for the wood pile, some little distance from the house, without any thought of approaching danger. No sooner had she arrived at the pile of wood, than she was startled by the most frightful screams of a panther near by and confronting her.

The unwelcome visiter had come up between her and the cabin, and she was evidently prevented from entering it. Frequent screams protruded from the panther, which were reverberated with increased horror from a distant hill side. Mrs. Mean's intense terror came near a convulsive ten-

dency. She ran to and fro endeavoring to quickly devise some means of escape, but with no avail. The animal kept up an occasional scream and exhibited signs of a vicious intent. It would tear up the ground with its claws, and pace backward and forward, working its way nearer its victim, and seemed to be preparing for the fatal leap. Mrs. Means made an appeal to the inmates of the house for assistance, who were upon the scene as soon as the first alarm was given.

Nearer and nearer the ferocious animal came to the form it sought for prey, and uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley were wild with excitement, for they could not determine what was best to do under the circumstances. They were both well armed, but the panther, a very large one, was between them and the one they sought to rescue, and they feared, should they attempt to shoot it with unsteady nerves they might miss their mark and slay the one so dear to them all. Finally it was

decided to bring out the dogs, which was done. No sooner had the dogs been brought forth than the mad animal gave a spring and fastened its great claws into Mrs. Mean's shawl, and tore it from her shoulders, and she ran for the house leaving the animal at work on the shawl, as though it thought some one was in it. She being liberated and safe, uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley administered several doses of cold lead which did not prove fatal, only disabled it from travelling. The dogs had been brought out, as before stated, yet, they were held in reserve until the proper time, which seemed to be now, for they went at the wounded animal with a vim and soon made quick work of him.

The flesh on Mrs. Mean's shoulders and neck was badly disfigured and bloody, but, on examination was found to be only superficial. Mrs. Mean's did not get over her fright for several days. Troubles multiply on the frontier, they thought, when, some days after

the panther skirmish, each member of the colony was visited by a Indian girl, advising them to flee for their lives, since the Chief, the great ruling power of the tribe, had issued a decree that on a certain day, they would go forth and exercise their innihilating powers, and the colony which now numbered thirty families, should be ruduced to naught, and the redman would occupy their homes, she said: "whiteman, the edict will be enforced, whiteman go, or whiteman die." The denizens but laughed her to scorn and told her they came to stay, and was willing to take the risk, and paid no attention to her remarks whatever, believing it a set up job to scare them off, but they were not made of that kind of material. They had too much faith in their dogs and guns for that.

The Indian girl returned to the tribe again, where she had, no doubt, been commissioned to bear the intelligence throughout the colony, thinking to frighten them so badly that they

would desert their claims, but such was not the case. They had too much at stake to leave and go elsewhere to begin life again. The colony composed of well armed, bold and stalwart men, and were, in numbers at least, about as strong as the tribe of Indians were, who threatened the distruction of their happiness and lives too. Notwithstanding they did not fear the approach of the savages as much as did they wild beasts of prey, but they kept continually on the lookout for them.

The day for the proposed massacre of the whites came at last. "Well," said uncle Henry, "are you all ready to cross deaths river to-day? This is the time the Chief has set for our solemn departure! How is it? This is a beautiful day to quit time and embrace eternity." The day was clear and beautiful and the sun shone forth in all her radiant splendor. Horns had been provided previously, which were to be used as signals

of distress, and they were all to answer said signals in person and well armed, and also to take their bull-dogs and blood-hounds with them, which were quite numerous in the colony. Every family had from two to three dogs and they were very fierce and malicious toward strangers. The dogs alone could make quick work of the savages, and a dainty meal for them would they be. The day passed quietly; evening came and no sound from a horn was heard all day. After sunset the Means and Yorley families met together, as was their usual custome.

“Listen,” said Mrs. Yorkley, “what’s that mean? Why, the rustling of the grass and bushes at the foot of the western hill, this calm and beautiful evening? Blow the horn uncle Henry, for I fear it is the sneaking approach of the savages.”

Uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley both blew their horns and then discharged two successful volleys from their breech loaders, in the

direction of the noise. At the same time, almost, the signals of distress were heard from the horns in different partes of the colony. As soon as the volleys were discharged, the Indians arose to their feet and thrilled the air with their war-whoops and started for the cabins on a double-quick, but were flustrated in their onward move, by the dogs, and brought to a halt. There were only five Indians in the gang, two of which were shot and instantly killed by uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley, while they were warding off the dogs, and the other three escaped with mangled limbs. Three attacks were made, by the Indians, in different sections of the colony that night, but, with great loss of lives among the Indians, while the whites were unharmed. The suckcess of the whites were mainly due to their faithful dogs. At another point two more of the redmen were instantly killed, by shooting, and another by the dogs. Three weeks from that day, the tribe pitched their

tents farther west, which was a relief to the white settlers. Year after year passed away with an occasional addition to their number by emigrants, and but few births. In six years, only three births were known to the colony. After the lapse of six years, a bright little boy came to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Yorkley, whome they called James, and in the same year, a new comer was attracting attention of uncle Henry, and they named the little stranger John, in honor of uncle Henry's twin brother. Three years later Miss Kate Yorkley first became a resident of the Yorkley cabin. She was their last child and only daughter they ever had to heir their vast wealth, but, uncle Henry's family was increased to four children, John, Emma, Ella and Charlie.

Reader! is not the foregoing sufficient to cement a true brotherly love with these two families? We dare say they were. The glaring endurance of years with the wild

beasts and the redman endeared them to each other, and they ever lived as though they were very near relatives. As time rolled on, they expanded their improvements and eradicated the colluvius matter and beautified their surroundings with numerous improvements. As soon as they deemed it safe to do so, they secured large sums of money they had on deposit in an Eastern bank, and proceeded to the erection of elegant two-story mansions, each on their own land. Prior to this, Mr. Yorkley had been occupying his cabin on uncle Henry's land, in obedience to the rules adopted by the colony, when first settling there. Uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley now owned each, one thousand acres near Lincoln, Neb., where they now live, and, as I have said before, they hold good titles to large tracts of land in Johnson and Harland Counties also. Kate Yorkley and Ella Means grew up fast friends, and were called the "beautiful bells of the West." They had

numerous opportunities to marry, but rejected them all. Kate affirms that she never loved any man until Ella's cousin Henry came into the neighborhood. Henry and Kate are wonderfully devoted to each other. Kate now sports an elegant gold ring, given her by Henry, and he frankly informs us, one and all, that on the 29th of December, which is his birthday, he contemplates taking the ring and its possessor back again, for safe keeping. Henry has made some extravagant improvements on his farm, and shall continue to improve until his premises shall compare favorably with that of his neighbors.

CHAPTER XV.

HENRY began work for his uncle Henry again, April 1st, at \$25. per month, and uncle Henry was delighted with the interest he manifested in his work, notwithstanding the work was all new to him, so far as the application of his physical organism is concerned.

He was very well advised theoretically, and his thorough book knowledge enabled him to make a quick practical application of this knowledge. He soon found that a theoretical exercise of knowledge was not half so irksome to perform as that of a practical, yet he wearied not, and delighted in the exercise of his great strength. As he went about his daily work he would rehearse his botanical lessons, and make frequent test applications, finding great delight. In the spring he very accurately noted with profound en-

joyment, the viminal process of the botanical world as the material changes were brought about by congenial agencies, as decreed and willed by the everlasting mind. So closely did he scrutinize the changes in the nature of trees and plants that he could begin with the germinating process, the expansion by rapid or retarded growth, the maturing of the foliage and the final conversion to soil. Henry's mind was not too much occupied with Kate Yorkley and his country home to cause him to neglect his father's family at Chicago; no, he received and sent letters weekly.

One morning uncle Henry told Henry he desired giving him some advise and hoped he would take it kindly, which Henry very kindly assented to, and the following conversation resulted:

"Well, Henry," said uncle Henry, "I am truly glad you have made your courtship a success thus far, and, am also glad that in

your case I am the affiancer, I am also glad for you that she accepted your proposition with such alacrity, without the unnecessary arguments on your behalf in order to persuade her to pronounce the decisive word "Yes," which is the all essential in such cases. I hope your affections are genuine, and that they may not lessen, but increase throughout life, which is but a very brief probation at most and should be well improved by us all. What I desire to say, most of all, by way of advising you is this; I am so glad you are so proud of your farm and manifest such pride and good taste in improving it, but I am very greatly displeased with your Sunday work, and hope you will desist its future continuance."

"Work! what Sunday work, uncle?" said Henry. "I don't work at any kind of manual labor on the Sabbath day. What can you mean?"

“ You perform mental labor, that is just as bad, I think,” said uncle Henry.

“ Oh ! I suppose you don’t believe in Sunday courting. If it displeases you, uncle, I shall quit it at once,” said Henry.

“ My remarks had no reference to courtship, whatever,” replied uncle Henry.

“ What then, pray tell,” inquired Henry, “ I know of nothing else whereby my mental powers are employed on the Sabbath day, only by reading the bible or studying the Sunday School lesson, and you can’t mean that. Please explain yourself, uncle ?

“ While I have no objection to courting on that day, I am not so sure,” said uncle Henry, “ that one is doing altogether right to while away the hours in courtship that should be spent sacred, but then I only give this as an opinion, not knowing whether it is right or wrong. But, you should not spend your time on your farm, on the Sabbath day, giving orders to your tenant and plotting and

planning his work for the week. If you will promise me to desist all this, you can have Saturdays free to attend to all such work as that."

"I had never thought how it looked before," said Henry, "to spend the Sabbath in that way. I did it uncle, not to violate the sacred day, but because all my other time was occupied in my work for you. It is indeed liberal in you to pay me such an extravagant salary, and then give me Saturdays besides."

Henry's fields are now waving in abundance of ripening grain, and, for him to work all week for uncle Henry, and be deprived of viewing his own beautiful crops during the week and on Sabbath too, was too much for him to bear. Henry will commence to teach school, in Lincoln, Nebraska, on the first Monday in September, which will be in about two weeks, for which he will be compensated about \$35 per month. Henry has never in-

formed his father's family, nor allowed any one else too, either, of his most wonderful success in his Western home, believing if they were cognizant of the facts, they would bitterly oppose him and affirm that he was too young to marry, and have him go home again, which he has no notion of doing—he is too well pleased.

Henry still has \$150, given him by his father before going West, and on the first Monday in September \$225, will be due him for labor, from uncle Henry, and, he is just in receipt of a registered letter from his pa which contained \$200 more, which his pa intended to be used in the purchase of Winter clothing, paying board and incidental expenses, not knowing that Henry had been paying his way in work.

We should have noted the fact elsewhere, that Henry removed his sheep and calves to his own land as soon as there was good grazing in the spring. Uncle Henry gave him a

splendid fresh young cow, and sold another, with her first calf, for \$35. He was the happiest man in the great state of Nebraska. Is it any wonder, Reader, that he indulged in the mental Sunday labor uncle Henry forbid him doing ?

His school days came at last, and he entered upon his task as teacher, and each day he added laurels to his fame, and his wonderful ability astounded the people. Henry was a profound thinker and a logical reasoner and an elequent orator, for one so young as he and, indeed he could discount many older heads, with the preponderance of practice in their favor. His scholars learned to love and respect him as they became better acquainted with him. The patrons all said they never had such an accomplished teacher to their knowledge, since their sojourn in the West. As Christmas times drew near they began to agitate the propriety of having a Christmas-tree and Henry repetedly dis-

couraged them in this olden time custom, at the same time disclosing new ideas to them. Henry believed in progress and originality believing something rare or entirely new has a better tendency to entertain and many times instruct the young. Henry's pupils are sanguine in the belief that he can be persuaded to have a Christmas-tree, they having no higher ambition to gratify a sense of pleasure than that. They preferred rather to adhere to methods long since lost attractiveness, to having ceased to be a novelty, but they have been thus educated by teachers of dormant energies and hence, they know of nothing better, and in a lethargical spirit devoid of the slightest hopes of enterprise, they contend for the tree, yet, to no avail, as Henry is immovable and determined.

“You had better have a ‘Christmas-Bell,’ or ‘Cross,’ or ‘Table,’ or ‘Ladder,’ or ‘Bow,’ or ‘Tub,’ or ‘Swix-swox,’” said Henry, “than to have a ‘Tree,’ for many reasons. One

reason is—a tree is so dirty and requires too much after-work, and another reason is—it is too ancient, and something more modern will show a spirit of enterprise and entertain more perfectly. I would propose something entirely new in this section—it is a ‘Swix-swox.’”

They had never heard of the like before, and Henry proposed to learn them. They met regularly and Henry learned them to sing many beautiful Christmas songs, and, also, some appropriate recitations, essays, orations, etc., were prepared for the ‘swix-swox.’

“The term ‘swix-swox,’” said Henry, “is applied to any kind of entertainment where it has a tendency to instruct, amuse or entertain. The term embraces both pleasure and profit. A Christmas-tree was once a ‘swix-swox’ yet like a tattered garment it has seen its day and lost its swix-swoxical effect, and should be laid on the shelf to rest.”

Now, the question that agitated their minds

most was—"what should they adopt to complete their 'swix-swox?'" Henry's great mind studied out a plan something like this—he and the pupils procured some very fine wire, on which the presents were suspended in mid air, in the room, and no one could detect the wire, as it was so fine. The presents were so tastefully arranged on the wire that all present admired the excellent taste. We will not attempt a description as to how the swix-swox was arranged, it would consume too much time and occupy too much space. Suffice it, we will say—the house was crowded to the exhaustion of its entire space, with human beings, eager to hear the programme rendered and witness the beautiful sights.

While Henry was preparing for the swix-swox, he was also getting ready for an occasion of more importance to him, it was his matrimonial feast. His wedding day approximates rapidly, and preparations for a

grand affair are being made, not only at the Yorkley mansion, but at uncle Henry's also. After the rendering of the swix-swox in all its grandeur, Henry adjourned his school for a vacation, and repaired to his uncle Henry's to spend a vacation of two weeks, and to prepare for the nuptial feast, which was so near at hand. Elegantly printed invitation cards were sent to all in the neighborhood, announcing the proposed union of Henry Means to Miss Kate Yorkley, the bell of the West, on the 29th of December.

Henry was but a boy in years, yet he resembled a man in size and, as we sometimes hear the expression—"his head is fifteen or twenty years the senior of his body." Henry will be 19 years old on his wedding day and Miss Kate Yorkley six months his senior. Henry is beginning to realize that he is nearing the contour of single life, and that he will very soon be a happy benedict. He was greatly vivified in mind over the affair and

worked energetically to make the occasion one of grandeur. Henry possesses an inherent volition that means nothing short of success, and he is not selfish in his disposition, but is very liberal hearted and has expansive views, just the kind to make the fair sex happy and contented with their lot.

Henry now spends his evenings with his intended bride, talking over, and arranging for the great occasion.

The next day after Henry arrived at uncle Henry's, to spend his vacation and prepair for his union with Miss Kate Yorkley, a vehicle drove up to uncle Henry's ladened with human freight and, much to Henry's surprise, it contained his sister Estella and two brothers Joe and Stanley. Judging from the amount of baggage that accompanied them, they were expecting a protracted visit. It is useless for me to add that Henry was overjoyed at seeing and conversing with them.

“What brought you here,” said Henry.

“Why, what do you suppose; did you not see the vehicle from which we alighted, a few moments ago? Why do you ask such a question?” said Estella laughing and, at the same time, squinting her eyes at Ella.

“Oh,” said Henry “I thought you had some motive in view. We are all invited out, to spend the day at Mr. Yorkleys on the 29,” said Henry.

“Yes,” said Joe, “we will all be there. Have they a gal for me too, Henry?”

“What in the duce do you mean, any way? Ella, I fear you are not true.”

“Ella is all right,” said Estella, “I tell you she is the ‘boss’ girl. Don’t you think we enjoy news as well as you do, Henry? If you don’t want any of our company we will return home again.”

“Oh, I am more than glad you have come. What has pa. and ma. to say about me?”

“Oh, they are more then pleased with your

Luck in Disguise and would like to have come," said Estella.

"I am the one to blame for this," said Ella, "I thought it wrong to keep it from them. I could have told you Henry, a week or two ago, but preferred to surprise you."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE great day came at last, the day for the nuptial feast, and a large concourse of happy souls thronged the Yorkley mansion, which was in most excellent order, and carefully arranged for the reception of the large list of invited guests, who were eagerly watching and waiting to catch a glimpse of the bride and groom, or, in other words, they were anxious to see the "knot tied." Ella and cousins,—Estella, Joe and Stanley were upon the scene at a very early hour. They were informed, by Ella through the mail some time ago, relative to the immense fortune Henry was about to possess in his union with Miss Kate Yorkley, and they were eager to see and learn all they could. They thought, to go early they would have a chance to see more and get acquainted with their new sister, so soon to be, before the tumultuous throng of witnesses arrived. They were com-

pletely captivated with the picturesque scenery at the Yorkley palace and were pleausurably disappointed. They imagined that Ella exaggerated a little in her detailed discription of Mr. Yorkley's situation and financial ability, and now they believed all she had told them and declared she had not told them half. The house, inside and out, was as clean as could be made, and all arround the premises presented a like appearance. Estella and her brothers were introduced to Kate while her name was yet Yorkley, and they declared, they never met anyone before, so sweet and womanly as she, her disposition was so modest, her voice so full of music and she bears acquaintance so easily, that, ere many words are exchanged, one almost thinks they have always known her. "Is it any wonder, Ella," said Estella, "that Henry ever loved Kate? I think she is a perfect angel. I would be surprised at any man not loveing one so perfect as she is."

“She is called the Bell of Lincoln,” said Ella, “and I think she merits all the good things they may say of her. She is beautiful, lovely and sweet.”

“I am surprised at the young men for letting her live single so long,” said Estella.

“I expect she has had fifty chances to marry, but none suited until now,” said Ella.

“Henry should feel highly complemented then,” returned Estella.

The house and yard were now filled with eager guests awaiting the consummation of Henry and Kate’s single life, by the administration of the solemn obligations, by uncle Henry

At 10 o’clock a. m. the lovely couple came in from an adjoining room, which was held in reserve for them to arrange for the solemn event. Uncle Henry first invoked a special benediction on the two, so soon to be made one by their solemn vows, and the hearts of the great crowd scarcely pulsated, and the

zephyrs seemed to soften to a breathless silence, as uncle Henry performed the ceremony with a voice so full of love.

The ceremony was long, solemn and very impressive and the spectators seemed impressed with the thought—there is a solemnity in matrimony, though the period of betrothment may be one of jollity.

The bride was arranged in splendor. Her dress was cream colored silk and richly trimmed. On the hands were gloves to match her dress and a chaplet of artificial flowers adorned her head and a bunch of similar hue at her throat. Her feet were clothed in an elegant pair of white satin slippers, of the latest cut. A rich veil fell gracefully from her head over her person and resting on her elegant long train on the floor. Henry wore an elegantly fitting suit of black, and sported a charming necktie, made by the bride's own handy fingers and out of some of the same material, of which her wedding

dress was made. They were both handsome in the extreme, and well matched. The congratulations were tiresome. At twelve o'clock sharp, dinner was announced. Our limited space will not admit of a detailed description of this sumptuous feast. The bride and groom were first seated at the table, when others were invited in, until the room was exhausted and, after uncle Henry had said grace, they all did ample justice to the occasion.

We neglected to state that the bride and groom found some valuable presents, in envelopes, underneath their plates, which, upon investigation proved to be as follows: to the bride was given, by her father \$1500, in one hundred dollar bills and government bonds equivalent to \$2000. To Henry was given a warranty deed for his one hundred and fifty acres of land, purchased of his uncle over one year ago. This was indeed a surprise to Henry, as he had bargained fairly with his

uncle for the land and had no other thought but that he would have it to pay for.

There were four tables and between thirty-five and fifty at each table, and they had plenty and to spare. Everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion grandly.

The invitations were not confined to the opulent of society as one would naturally suppose under such circumstances, but the inopulent were equally welcomed and the hospitalities as freely bestowed on one as the other. The next day was Henry's day and a cordial invitation was publicly given by uncle Henry for all to come and dine with him. Notwithstanding the day was cool and frosty, yet the sun shown out brightly and the vast multitude assembled to pay their homage to the honored benedict and lovely bride. A brass band came out from Lincoln according to previous arrangements, and discoursed some excellent music.

The crowd began to come at an early hour,

in the morning and remained until late in the afternoon.

After the crowd had dispersed and they were left alone, Henry proposed making an investigation relative to the valuable presents of the day before, and said:—

“Uncle Henry, what does this document mean which I received yesterday?”

Uncle Henry laughed and replied:—“It means just what it says. The land is yours. It does not affront you, does it Henry?”

“Not at all,” said Henry, “but then I feel that it is very ungenerous in me to be continually receiving of you without the minutest compensation on my part. It is about time I was doing something for you.”

“I hope to be liberally rewarded in the “Great Beyond,” said uncle Henry; “I feel it my duty and, thank heaven, I esteem it a privilege to help those that are struggling to help themselves. I admire this go-a-head-a-

tiveness in you, Henry, and must and will do what I can to encourage you."

"But then you have children to whome your estate should be bequeathed, and they are legal heirs, and I am not," rejoined Henry.

"Tut, tut!" said uncle Henry. "Take it and make good use of it. The children and your aunt are exceedingly anxious for me to give you one hundred and fifty acres of land, and do you suppose I will miss it? not much, as I have over one thousand acres in the state of Nebraska and I secured it at my own price and scarcely realized the purchasing expence. You are my namesake, why not give to you. Just look at my mammoth estate. I have enough land left to make each of my children in most excellent circumstances, to say nothing of the several thousands of dollars at interest, which would keep several such families as mine. I gave you the sheep and calves in the first place to induce you to remain West and to keep your

mind employed, that you might not become homesick. I tell you, Henry, you will always find me ready to help those who try to help themselves."

This last explanation satisfied Henry's mind, and thanking his uncle repeatedly for so precious a gift, the subject was dropped.

Henry rented a house in Lincoln and uncle Henry and Mr. Yorkley furnished it in fine taste, preparatory to Henry resuming his school duties. He began his school with renewed energies, magnanimously exhibiting a truly happy life. He has the will and it is invariably backed with energy and grit. While he was receiving his \$35. per month for his services in the school room, Kate was also busy giving music lessons on the organ and piano, for which she realized a nice sum of money.

Henry's tenant succeeded in raising for him, a large crop of corn, wheat, oats, flax, etc., last season, and garnered it in good

order. On the 22 of March Henry bought him a wagon and good team of horses and moved on his farm to try his luck. He was in the hight of his glory and could not be persuaded to remain indoors but a short time during the day time. Every thing moved on harmoniously and in good style. He labored hard and when the time came for the gathering of his grain, he was elated at the astounding results of his labor. His large herd of cattle and sheep had become so enormous that his grazing room was exhausted, as his farm was too small for cropping and stock raising too. Mr. Yorkley seeing the state of affairs he presented Henry with a deed for one hundred acres more land adjoining his. They can now live in royal style and they lacked for nothing to make them comfortable and happy, and with nothing to disturb their quiet and peace, until within a very few weeks of their first anniversary, when two new names were recorded on their family

record, and they called the little newcomers names Stanley, for Henry's brother, and the other—Manley, for a friend of Henry. Henry was the happiest man in Nebraska, and they were both very proud of their two little pets.

Estella, Stanley and Joe, after remaining in Nebraska one month, returned to Chicago again, and had many wonderful thing to disclose to their parents regarding Henry and his lovely bride, and Mrs. Means declaired their record was Luck in Disguise.





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A detailed black and white line drawing of the Eiffel Tower, showing its intricate lattice structure and the flag at the top. The tower is positioned on the left side of the page, with its base extending towards the bottom left corner. A beam of light emanates from the top of the tower, pointing towards the 'GOLD MEDAL' text.

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SOAPS.

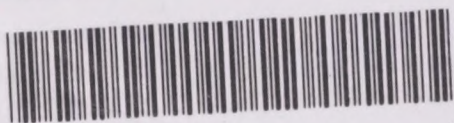
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A detailed black and white line drawing of various Parisian buildings, including domes, arches, and classical facades, situated at the base of the Eiffel Tower.





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